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#62 SPRING 1999

THE BOSS MAGAZINE

Backstreets

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HALL OF FAME

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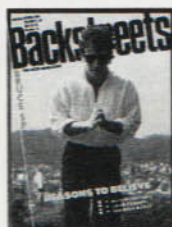


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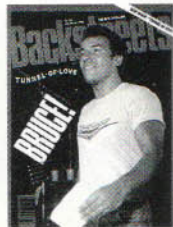
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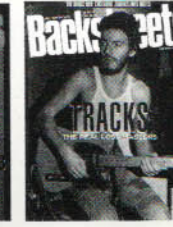
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Blinded by the Light: Bruce and the E Street Band take their bows. Asbury Park, 3/18/98.

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March 15, 1999
Kevin Mazur Photo

OFF THE WALL

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND PAUL McCARTNEY

March 15, 1999
Kevin Mazur Photo

LETTERS

GLORY DAYS

Dear Editor:

Reading the latest issue of *Backstreets*, I was very disappointed with the negative feedback on the *Tracks* box set. I am especially disheartened with the lack of *Tracks* stuff Bruce has done on the tour so far. The box stuff I feel is tremendous and very worthy of playing live. All the people who want to hear the same old songs should just listen to the albums. Bruce has always made sure that his shows were mixed with new stuff, old favorites and those rare cover tunes I think he does so well. I don't want you to take this wrong, that I don't like the old favorites, I just feel fans should give the box stuff a chance rather than say it's not up to *Born to Run* standards. I am someone who enjoys the *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* music, and I will support all that Bruce puts out, not just keep asking him to play the favorites.

Standing on the beach outside Convention Hall, listening to the second night of the rehearsal shows and hearing "Land of Hope and Dreams" showed me

that he still has the ability to write songs we will cherish forever. If people will just listen instead of live in the past, we will have many more years from the man.

David Tracia
Hudson, MA

A LITTLE TOUCH-UP

Dear Editor:

I love the liner notes booklet you guys prepared for *Tracks* and included in the latest issue of *Backstreets*. This is exactly the kind of information that should have been in the official Columbia package! I really see only one significant mistake in the notes. You correct the recording location for both "A Good Man Is Hard to Find (Pittsburgh)" and "Frankie" from the Power Station to the Hit Factory, noting (in connection with "Frankie") that "all other tracks from May '82 were recorded [at] the Hit Factory, suggesting this may be a typo." Yes, there is a typo in connection with the May '82 recordings, but you've got it exactly backwards. The May '82 sessions were held at the Power Station, not the Hit Factory, and it's not "A Good Man Is Hard to Find

(Pittsburgh)" and "Frankie" that should have been corrected, but rather "My Love Will Not Let You Down" and "This Hard Land."

From Dave Marsh's *Glory Days*, page 113, describing the initial studio sessions for what became *Born in the U.S.A.*: "The rehearsals ended almost as swiftly as they began. 'We became aware after the second day of rehearsals that we were gonna start squeezing some of the vitality out of this stuff if we continued this process, and there was no reason to do it,' said Plotkin. 'The first time something came out great in a rehearsal, which was either the first afternoon or early the second afternoon, we all went, 'We should have had the tape running. This is crazy. Let's not waste ourselves here.' So the sessions moved to the Power Station recording studio on New York's West Side [emphasis mine]."

On page 158, describing Bruce's preference to work alone in his California home studio: "Bruce did have one song that he wanted to try cutting with the band, and in February [1983] he flew back to New York briefly and in a short session recorded 'My Hometown' at the Hit Factory,

the studio at which the rest of the album would be made [emphasis mine]."

Keep up the good work! I look forward to the arrival of each new issue of *Backstreets*. The only problem is that it just doesn't come out often enough!

Brad Elliott
Pampa, TX

YOU BEEN HURT

Dear Editor:

I'd be curious to know if most Bruce fans feel ripped off like I do right now. I was very disappointed when some of the greatest tracks of all time were not included on *Tracks* when a lot of later-career average material was (much of Disc 4). Then, I find out that "The Promise" and "The Fever" will be on *18 Tracks*. Why should loyal fans who shelled out \$50-60 for *Tracks* pay another whatever for another CD with only three songs that weren't on the first one? I would love to hear Bruce's management explain this one to me!

Jim Bobus
via e-mail

THE PROMISE

Dear Editor:

I'm a 20-year-old, 3-year subscriber to your magazine. You printed a letter I wrote to you when I was in high school, back in the *Greatest Hits* issue [#48]. First of all, I want to let you guys know that the *Tracks* issue is absolutely brilliant. The review of the box set is right on. I have all the bootlegs too and I have things I love that he didn't put on, but let's appreciate when we have here. I agree with pretty much everything the review said. It's pretty amazing to me that (with few exceptions) all the discs stand up on their own as individual albums. The man never ceases to amaze me.

I also loved the editorial about rediscovering Bruce over and over again. Isn't that funny how that happens? There are periods where he's just my religion and he's taking up a lot shelf space. Then I'll listen to something I've heard about 500 times before, and all other music is ruined for a couple of months. I'm in the middle of one of those phases now. It's funny how we all share the same experiences.

The *Tracks* "alternate road map"

THUNDER ROAD



LAST ISSUE COLLECTOR'S ITEM:

THE RIVER LP's TOUR 1980-81
SPRINGSTEEN SOLO LP NEBRASKA
ROY BITTAN INTERVIEW
RARE PHOTOS & VINTAGE POSTERS

We've just scored the very last stack of these and can offer them at a lower price than we've seen before, but when they're gone, that's it. The first Springsteen fanzine, *Thunder Road*, stopped publishing in the early '80s after only a handful of issues, but they were an inspiration to *Backstreets* and remain great collectibles and great reads, too. This double issue was the magazine's swan song and probably its best. *Thunder Road* #6/7 is a huge 64-page issue packed with solid writing and beautiful photos. Especially at this price, it's a must have.

FINAL ISSUE OF THUNDER ROAD.....\$10

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is a brilliant idea. One of the best things I've seen in your magazine. I too was very disappointed with the packaging.

One little thing: I have to say I'm glad Bruce did away with the flute (or was it a recorder?) solo on "Santa Ana." I personally think that's a good decision by a mature artist.

I promise to continue to convert all of Northwestern's campus to Bruce. Believe me, there is a strong fan base in my generation—I don't even think he knows that.

John Mayer
via e-mail

DYING FOR SOME ACTION

Dear Editor:

It's a great time to be a Bruce tramp—first the box set, then a tour! Bruce provided the soundtrack to my difficult adolescence, although I've only seen two shows ('80 and '84). In 1988 I was shut out for tickets to the *Tunnel* tour opener in my own hometown, and by '92 I was on a different path musically from Bruce. Bruce had grown (not surprisingly for a 40-year old husband and father) more quickly than I had ever anticipated, and I'm still struggling to catch up.

I didn't even bat an eye at *Tom Joad*. Though I like a few things on it, I still couldn't let go of the Bruce I've always loved and admired, the Bruce who played the most consistently awe-inspiring shows and did so most spectacularly with the E Street Band. Seeing him in any other context had never much appealed to me, and I suspect I'm not alone in that opinion. Ticket sales this summer will surely bear this out.

It's simply a matter of taste—some people prefer Neil Young solo, but to me the quintessential Neil is when he's stomping the stage with Crazy Horse. I am very grateful to Bruce for realizing the value of the band, and insisting that they share in his induction at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremony. The *Tracks* box brought it all back to me, just how great they were, and are, and the Hall of Fame version of "The Promised Land" only sustains the buzz. The thought that I'll soon be hearing these songs live again sends a shiver down my spine. Thank you, *Backstreets*, for being there all

these years through Bruce's (and our) many ups and downs.

Dave Roche
Worcester, MA

ONLY SOUND AT NIGHT

Dear Editor:

I live in the Atlantic City area and decided to take the trip up to Asbury Park, to meet a friend from Philly and see if we could luck out and buy tickets for the rehearsal shows. They only let in about 20 people, three or four songs into the show, and I was number 216—so no luck there. I didn't see one scalper selling any tickets (although people in line said there were a few). My friend and I did have a great experience sitting on the beach and listening to the show with about 150 other people, though. After the show started, about half the people in line moved to the beach, took a seat, and acted as if they were inside—it was really an interesting experience. We sang along with all of the people inside, and during some of the slow songs and when Bruce spoke, the beach was so quiet you could hear the waves from the ocean and traffic driving by. The people standing on the boardwalk waiting for extra tickets did not leave their spot until the 17th or 18th song, no kidding—not until a lady came out of the hall and said they were not letting anyone else in. Those people then came to the beach (on both sides of the hall) and joined with the rest of us. It was amazing how quiet everyone on the beach was during those slow songs, with the ocean noise in the background—really a neat experience.

Paul Nazarok
via e-mail

Backstreets encourages letters to the editor. We may edit for content, clarity, space, the usual stuff. Keep the cards and letters—and tour comments—coming! *Backstreets*, P.O. Box 51225, Seattle, WA 98115, USA, or by e-mail to editor@backstreets.com. To subscribe or renew your subscription to *Backstreets*, contact orders@backstreets.com or take care of it at our website, www.backstreets.com.

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From last year's Red Bank, NJ, concert where Bruce Springsteen joined Steve Van Zandt, Max Weinberg, Clarence Clemons, Danny Federici, Jon Bon Jovi, Southside Johnny and a host of other Jersey musicians for a historic concert.

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BACK

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Saving Tillie

Beyond the Palace

By Robert Crane

"Bruce fans will take weeks of precious vacation time to visit the New Jersey heartland he has nearly always inhabited in both music and body; the fans come from far and wide, from Europe and beyond.... Now I ask you: do Dylan, Bowie, Stones or Beatles fans have such a holyland to visit? A land of rockdreams chronicled in songs and lyrics to make their own pilgrimage come high summer? I don't think so."

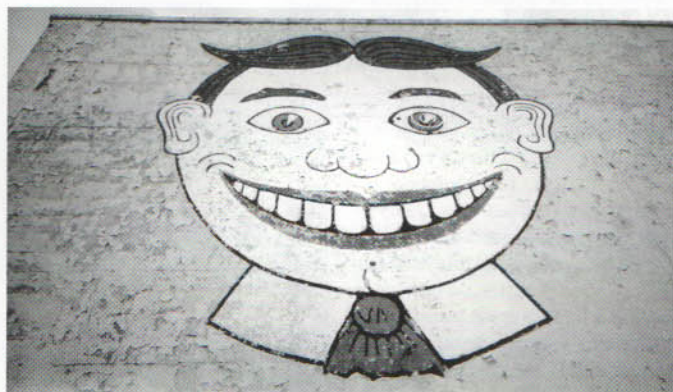
—Elliott Murphy
Rock and Folk, February 1999

So little remains. So few clubs, so little music. The circuit is nontraversable, and Madame Marie's is shuttered. The Casino leaks so badly, the inside resembles a terrarium. No one is even chased beneath the boardwalk anymore; it's all filled in with sand and debris.

Bit by bit our land of rockdreams fills with sand and holes and barren lots; the loss, however, is not ours alone. Gone, too, are the Asbury Park jazz clubs and the blues joints and amusement arcades and hotels, all replaced by a lunar urban landscape where nothing speaks to the next generation of the special places that once were.

Worse than these disappearances is the reason why. Fifteen years of neglect, of land speculation and unresolved lawsuits, of bankruptcies and soaring tax liens have devastated Asbury Park, turning what was once a magic kingdom into a poster child of declining communities.

The collapse of the second floor of the decaying Palace Amusements building last July fit this mold perfectly, since not even a dime's worth of upkeep had been spent on the Palace in over a decade. Structural engineers for the city who rushed in after the collapse found a previously undetected roof collapse, a number of holes in the roof, and two significant stress cracks on the exterior wall. The Palace, they said, is structurally unsound, and needs to come down.



By any pragmatic measure, they're right. But in a far more emotional sense, the prospect of losing both the Palace and the iconic image of Tillie, painted on the Palace wall, drove some of us a little crazy. Isn't there a strong thread in Bruce's music that conveys a searching for community, for a place where people feel they belong? Doesn't a livable community, one where people find that connection, honor its histories and traditions?

The Save Tillie campaign came into existence in mid-July during a frantic hour of e-mailing between six kindred souls. All said, "Yes, let's do it." Yes, they all said, other Springsteen fans will join us. Just look at the Kristen Ann Carr and World Hunger Year auctions; we are a community that cares. And yes, as impractical as it seems, they all agreed we probably could remove and restore a 20-foot-by-13-foot image, painted on 50-year-old concrete blocks, as an all-volunteer project of the Springsteen community.

In fairness, the condition of those bricks is an issue, and saving Tillie is by no means assured. It will be a tough, technically difficult job. The Tillie wall, facing north along Cookman Avenue, has been constantly battered by ocean weather since the late '40s.

Tillie came to into existence in 1949, painted by Shore artist and World War II veteran Worth Thomas. In the great tradition of amusement park faces dating to Coney Island in the late 1890s,

Thomas gave Tillie a swooping hairdo, a Cheshire-cat grin and glowing neon that drew fun-seekers to the Palace from as far north as the Paramount-Convention Hall complex.

50 years later, the campaign to save Thomas' painting draws strength not only from Tillie's identity as an icon of Asbury Park, but also from the Springsteen community worldwide. Its first significant Springsteen-related appearance was a '70s publicity photograph (recently reprinted on page six of the *Tracks* lyric book), showing Bruce and the band standing beneath the neon-lit face. Tillie reappeared again on tour T-shirts in the *Tunnel of Love* era after Springsteen filmed a portion of his "Tunnel" video inside the Palace.

Over the months, our core group of six has grown to 200 people whose emotional commitment to the idea of community is the essential fuel that drives Save Tillie. We've had a few detractors: one lectured us that Tillie was "meant to be ephemeral" and its demise would be far short of tragic; another, from Belmar, accused us of pandering to nostalgia and called on the public to "smash Tillie."

From within the Springsteen community, however, not a single person said "Don't do it," or "It can't be done," or "It's too tough," or "I'm too busy." Instead, the response has been: "Tell me how I can help." As we grew in number, so too did our capacity to develop the plan to remove

Tillie, restore the paint and neon, and reinstall Tillie at a new location. We also raised a limited amount of funds (and are almost without words to express our gratitude to Bruce and to Joe Crushecky for performing Save Tillie benefits) that enable us to meet costs that volunteerism alone cannot provide.

With fundraising over and the plan in place, most of the ducks are in a row. The owner of the Palace has given his blessing to the rescue mission. The City of Asbury Park has approved two new homes for Tillie—the Casino arcade (if funds can be found for roof repairs) or the New Jersey Transit station on Main Street. Support for saving Tillie grows by the day, perhaps best signified by an Air Force sergeant from Asbury Park who told us that, while on active duty in Turkey, he returned home last summer "for the first time after seven years overseas. My wife and I took our children by the Palace, took some pictures and reminisced about old times... Saving Tillie is a great idea. I hope it will remain in the local area if it is to be moved."

The major dilemma facing Save Tillie today is that while no one wants to remove Tillie until the fate of the Palace is resolved, that decision is seemingly no closer than it was when the Palace partially collapsed last July. The combination of legal and political infighting that has haunted Asbury Park for 15 years has the Palace in its grip. Each passing day, each new ocean storm, up the odds against our success by causing further deterioration to the bricks on which Tillie is painted. ➔

Bob Crane organized the Save Tillie strategy committee consisting of Baltimore lawyers Deborah Robinson and Stacie Tobin, Backstreets editor Christopher Phillips, Washington D.C. consultant Tom Dobbins, and Rick Mariani of New Jersey Transit. For further information on Save Tillie, write via e-mail to: pjcrane@erols.com.

And they're off!

E Street Tour Begins in Barcelona

By Jonathan B. Pont



Before taking off for Europe, Bruce Springsteen made time to drop in on an old friend and a living legend. Both performances were for television, raising Springsteen's profile before the tour with the E Street Band.

On Friday, February 26, Springsteen appeared on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, giving bandleader Max Weinberg a musical send-off. At the end of a program already practically dedicated to the drummer, Springsteen walked out with an acoustic guitar. Appearing relaxed and fit, he led the Max Weinberg Seven through a horn-accentuated "Working on the Highway." Afterward, he chatted with the show's guests, Bill Murray and Jon Stewart, and hosts O'Brien and Andy Richter as the show ended. Both Murray and Stewart referred to Bruce earlier in the program; Stewart talked about seeing the Princeton, New Jersey concert in 1978. It was Weinberg's last show before taking a leave of absence; he'll return to *Late Night* after the tour.

While Springsteen had been announced as a performer at a star-studded concert honoring Johnny Cash at New York's Hammerstein Ballroom on April 6, his travel schedule prevented him from attending. Still, Springsteen recorded "Give My Love to Rose" in advance, and it was played at the show. TNT broadcast the proceedings as part of its Masters Series, which included Lyle Lovett, Willie Nelson, and the Man in Black himself, Johnny Cash.

On the heels of his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the release of *Tracks*, Bruce Springsteen reunited with the E Street Band for a tour that will carry them through at least the autumn.

The first leg of the tour, which began in Barcelona, Spain, on April 9, has played to indoor venues holding between 10,000 and 25,000 spectators. With shows added regularly since the original tour announcement, the tour is now scheduled to scatter 36 dates in 13 countries. The European tour will reach into summer, when Springsteen will move into larger outdoor venues, wrapping up June 27 in Oslo, Norway.

Springsteen referred to the rehearsal shows in Asbury Park in March as the "rebirth" of the E Street Band. The current show holds fast to that characterization. Set lists have been stocked each night with staples like "Badlands" and "Born to Run," and occasionally spiced up with one-offs from *Tracks* and a revived "Jungleland." Both "Darkness on the Edge of Town" and "Backstreets" took a breather as the first leg approached a two-week break in May (though the latter appeared again in Manchester, May 1). A new song, "Land of Hope and Dreams," has been the show's closing number. Cities with only one concert typically enjoyed a model-A set that began with a one-two of "My Love Will Not Let You Down" and "Prove It All Night." But where Springsteen settled in for more than one night, all bets were off. The second night in Milan, May 20, for example, saw "I Wanna Be With You" making its live debut in the opening slot.

One-offs like "Dollhouse" (April 24, Vienna) and occasional performances like "Rendezvous" (last played December 31, 1980), "This Hard Land," and "Lucky Town" have been a treat for fans



Nils and Bruce in Bologna, Italy.

seeing more than one night. Moreover, Springsteen and the E Street Band have been rehearsing a variety of songs at soundcheck, including "Candy's Room," "Hearts of Stone" and "Trouble River." Conventional wisdom suggests that these songs will debut later in the tour, particularly when the band plays more multi-night runs.

A part of the show that has enjoyed staying power is a five-song block that includes "Facto-

ry," "The River," a full-band rock arrangement of "Youngstown," "Murder Incorporated" and "Badlands." Springsteen has again called on "Light of Day" to close the set.

One custom absent from the 1999 tour is the intermission. But there isn't much less music than shows from past tours. Concerts in 1999 have averaged about 25 songs and clock in at about 2 hours, 45 minutes from start to finish.

At press time there was no confirmation of when the tour would begin in the U.S., where it would begin, or how long it would last. Rumors of a dozen shows at New Jersey's Continental Airlines Arena have swirled since word of a tour broke. Other cities that seem likely include Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Boston, and Chicago.

Also rumored are shows to coincide with Bruce's birthday at the PNC Bank Arts Center, a run at the soon-to-be-complete Staples Center in Los Angeles, and even a New Year's Eve show in New Jersey.

Full coverage of the European tour will appear in the next issue of *Backstreets*. ➔

STOP PRESS:

After this issue of *Backstreets* went to press, the first U.S. tour dates were finally announced. The last concert of the current European tour is slated for June 27 in Oslo, Norway; less than three weeks later, Springsteen and the E Street Band will spend a month in residence at the Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, NJ.

Initially, five dates for this summer Meadowlands stand were announced to go on sale May 22 at 9 a.m. On the day of the sale, five more dates were added at 11 a.m. and another five at 2 p.m., making a total of 15 New Jersey dates:

July: 15, 18, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29

August: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12

With all shows selling out, Springsteen became the number-one selling artist in the history of the Meadowlands. All seats except those behind the stage were priced at \$67.50 (plus Ticketmaster service charges), which one fan called "outrageous."

These are the only confirmed U.S. dates, though other Northeast cities should be announced shortly, presumably including Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Just how extensive and how long the U.S. tour will be is currently up in the air; check the backstreets.com website for more up-to-date tour information.



Catching mice with the Boss

Catching Up With Robbin Thompson

By Robert Makin

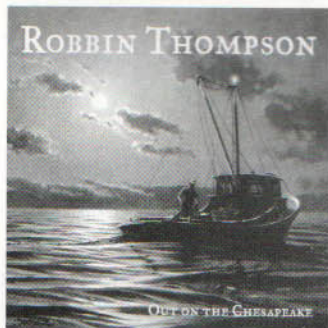
Robbin Thompson was a member of Steel Mill, Bruce Springsteen's best Asbury Park band before he pursued a solo career. Raised in Florida, the son of a NASA engineer, Thompson met Springsteen while Steel Mill was touring Virginia. Thompson was attending school there at the time when not gigging with a band called Mercy Flight.

Thompson quit school, moved North to Asbury, and joined Steel Mill after Mercy Flight broke up. But when Springsteen went solo shortly after that, Thompson returned to Virginia, where he now owns a successful recording studio, In Your Ear. He has also pursued a solo career of his own, releasing eight albums, some on his Out There label.

His latest, *Out on the Chesapeake*, demonstrates that Thompson has grown into an excellent singer-songwriter whose rootsy, lyrical style recalls Springsteen, as well as fellow Southerners John Hiatt, Dr. John and Bruce Hornsby. He also has a sardonic wit à la Randy Newman, as heard on the album's best track, "Light at the End of the Tunnel."

An avid sailor, Thompson expresses his passion and concern for the sea in the title track of his new disc. He does the same for the lost American dream in the Hiatt-like "Missileman," a tribute to his late father.

Copies of the CD can be ordered from his website, www.songs.com/robbin, or by e-mail at robbin@lobe.com



Thompson, right, with a long-haired Springsteen at the Upstage, 1970.

You have a line in "Out on the Chesapeake": "They're able to send a man into outer space, they should be able to bring the bay back again." You're concerned about the environment.

Definitely. Nine years ago, I got a sailboat. I live in the Chesapeake Bay Basin. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest bay in the U.S., and it's having some trouble. A lot has to do with run-off from the farmers and golf course owners who use stuff that's bad for the water. They just need to be educated about what happens.

When the bay was first discovered, oysters would totally clean the water every three or four days by sucking in the water and throwing it back out. Now the oyster population is depleted. There's not enough money to replenish the beds to grow new oysters. It's a snowball effect.

I remember Billy Joel's album, *Storm Front*, was a nice try to do something. I just didn't want to make this album a total package of an environmental statement. But I have a warm spot for the bay. It's my refuge. Some people buy a Harley to go out somewhere, and I got a sailboat.

Sailing in your "Songbird" not only inspired the title track of *Out on the Chesapeake* but the entire disc?

It's amazing how that environment can open your senses. I do a lot of sailing alone. I'll be out there thinking about whatever I'll be thinking about. When you're 10 miles into the bay, there's nobody to hear you. So whenever something happened that would inspire me, I'd just grab that guitar and put the boat on auto pilot and start wailing. That's how a lot of these songs

were written, or at least finished. I call the auto pilot my second mate, because the boat just steers itself. It allows me to do stuff I wouldn't normally do.

The shot of you in your boat on the *Chesapeake* tells me you've been successful with your studio. What have been some of your biggest projects and what do you have coming up?

The studio does well. I'm not wealthy by any means, but we have a good business here, and I guess it does allow me that. However, it's not a new boat.

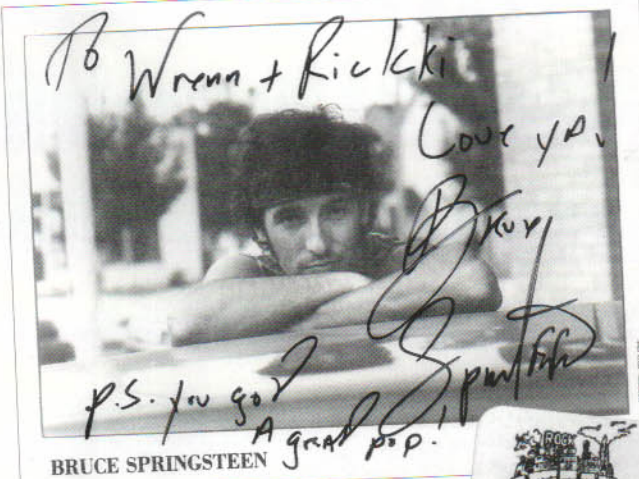
Most of the things we do are commercials. We do stuff for Saab, Holiday Inn, Miller Light (those Dick spots), Wrangler, Circuit City. We write and record the post-production music. We also do audio dialogue replacement for movies. They'll make a lot of movies on a set outdoors that's supposed to be 1872, and an airplane flies over and ruins the dialogue but not the take. So an actor comes in to redo his lines. We have the ability to replace the lines, so you can't tell that it's been redone.

What inspired "Missileman"?

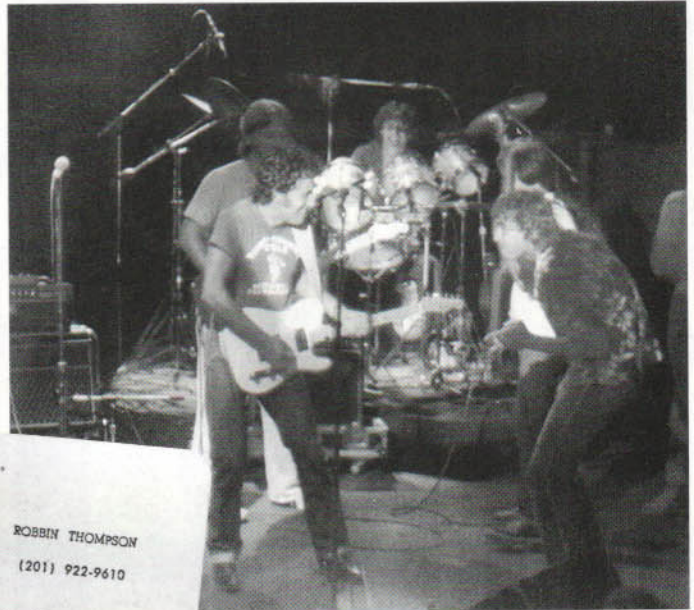
"Missileman" is very autobiographical. I grew up in Florida. I was born in Massachusetts, but when I was 7 years old, my family moved down to Florida with wild cats and gators roaming around. My dad went to work as a missileman at Cape Canaveral.

So I grew up watching the missiles take off from my backyard. We were close enough to go out and see them coming over the trees, and we'd hear the rumble of their launch. When Alan Shepard took off, me and my dad were out in the backyard. When John Glenn came back, I was in the drum and bugle corps to welcome him home.

But I took it all for granted. Now people drive 1,000 miles to see it—that was a common, everyday thing for us. We used to have parties on the beach when we knew the missiles were going off. The coolest launches



Above: A promo photo signed for Robbin's kids, Wrenn and Rikki; right: Robbin's Steel Mill card from 1970; far right: Bruce jams with the Robbin Thompson Band at the Bayou on 8/6/81.



were the launches that were unsuccessful. They'd blow up, and it would be like the Fourth of July. It was the government's way of giving us a billion dollar fireworks display.

It was a treat until it got serious, when Gus Grissom and those guys died. Dad took that very hard. It was a solemn week in our family. When the Challenger blew up, there were no Challenger jokes with us. It was a big deal.

But that era was something America could stand behind—and did. It was a cause, to try to get to the moon before the Russians, the Communists. To me, it was a great era of America being for something. There were people who didn't like the money being spent for that cause, but it was a rallying point for a lot of people. Growing up in the middle of it was just exceptional.

I met some of those guys. They were our dinner guests. I saw them driving around in their Corvettes, all that stuff in *The Right Stuff*. *I Dream of Jeannie* was just a hoot for us, because we knew it wasn't done where we lived. Who'd they think they were kidding?

But man, it was a cool era. Being a kid down there surfing one day around the jetties, then all of a sudden, there goes a Titan missile taking off. All those things were just so close.

This [launch] with John Glenn that just happened would have been an incredible thing for my father. He would have gone up in a second. It was a special time for

my family. We all watched that launch. Two minutes into the flight, I called my mom and she was wailing and crying. Everybody talked about how much our dad would have dug this.

You play guitars made by your father?

He was an engineer. When he retired early because of illness, he secretly went out to learn how to make acoustic guitars. I found this out when I was given this guitar for Christmas in 1988.

I record with them, but I don't play with them live, because I don't want to beat them up. I'm pretty brutal with guitars. I have a 12-string that he started but died in 1990 before he finished. The first one was the biggest surprise I ever had for Christmas. After that he made five more. My brothers-in-law each have two, and I have four. They're all the best guitars I have. I have ten guitars, Martins and Gibsons, but none of them sound like these. They're very special and make all the other guitars insignificant.

What brought you to Asbury Park, to the Upstage, to Steel Mill?

I've had a lot of interesting things happen to me. I try to tell somebody I meet on airplane what I've done and where I've been and I have to stop myself and just listen. They think, "This guy is full of shit. I can't wait for him to get off this plane."

I was a Florida kid who came to school in Virginia. When I got here, I started in a band called

Mercy Flight.

They didn't have a singer and I had a P.A., so I was in. It was in those months after Woodstock.

I had started playing in bands in Florida, but they were renegade bands, because we played stuff you couldn't dance to, like the Stones and weird, psychedelic stuff, lots of Doors and Creedence. But the bands up here were doing Temptations and shag music, so we were a different band. We ended up playing in a park with Steel Mill.

The two bands became friends. Whenever Steel Mill came down, we'd always open for them. We played this concert on the 7th floor of a parking deck in the middle of the city of Richmond. Three thousand people came. That was the last concert for Mercy Flight, but Steel Mill was thinking of adding a singer, which was surprising to me, because Bruce sang his ass off. So we said, let's give this a whirl.

I went to New Jersey to audition at the Challenger East Surfboard Factory, Tinker [West]'s place. I went up for the weekend, jammed around. We said, let's do it. So I quit school and moved there.

The first year, I was always the new kid from Florida. Why was I there? But it worked. Then it ended abruptly. I came back from Christmas holiday and Bruce said, "I'm thinking of doing something on my own." The record people weren't really interested in the band. So I came

back down here to finish school and I started doing my own thing. I got a record deal on my own on Nemperor Records, an Atlantic subsidiary.

How did you like Asbury Park?

I enjoyed being there. It was such a different environment for me. It was a northern city, but you could surf there. That's the thing that amazed me and made me feel most comfortable. I was a real good surfer. There weren't a lot of real good surfers there at that point. I lived in the surfboard factory with Bruce. How cool is that? I had Tinker's Challenger surfboards at my disposal and it wasn't a long bike ride to the beach.

What amazed me when I got there was that you had to pay to get on the beach. I couldn't figure that out. That's why I liked Bruce's song "Guilty," which I did for that tribute album [*One Step Up/Two Steps Back*]. It was about getting arrested for sneaking on the beach. They'd make such a big deal out of it.

Bruce surfed, but he wasn't very good. So did Vini Lopez. It was kind of cool that that was the one thing I could do better than anybody in the band.

What was it like living in the surfboard factory?

It was me, Tinker, Bruce and Vini Lopez. Me, Bruce and Tinker all had beds in the same room. We got good at catching mice. We'd take a shoe box and a drum stick and a piece of cheese,

Continued Page 42

DISC

New vinyl available

Grooving on 18 Tracks



To the dismay of record collectors and audiophiles, the *Tracks* box hasn't been released on vinyl, but the next best thing has: Columbia released *18 Tracks* as a 2LP set in April. Though there are no additional unreleased songs on the LPs, it's still great to hear "The Fever," "The Promise" and "Trouble River" on the turntable.

There is a significant discrepancy between what Bruce actually sings and what is printed in the *18 Tracks* booklet for "Trouble River." The printed lyrics have the last line of the song as "and I'll be breathin' free air," but on the recorded version, Bruce's line is much darker: "'cause water's rising and I'm going down."

Fans have waited for a single off *Tracks*, and though the U.S. remains quiet, Austria has

stepped up and released a four-track "Sad Eyes" disc. No unreleased B-sides here—"Man at the Top" and "Take 'Em as They Come" both appear on *Tracks*, and "Missing" has appeared previously as a CD single. Other configurations include a two-track pairing of "Sad Eyes" with "Missing" in Holland.

"Sad Eyes" has also provided something for vinyl collectors—or at least those lucky enough to find the French 12-inch promo release, which commanded around \$65 shortly after its appearance. At first glance, the vinyl housed in a plain white sleeve could appear to be a bootleg, stamped with the artist and title, but it is official, bearing the red Columbia label.

Also on vinyl in April was the *Born To Run* reissue by Classic Records. This audiophile company does justice to original releases by issuing quality pressings on heavy vinyl, while keeping the original design and catalog numbers intact. However, with its reissue of *Born To Run* as part of its Columbia 50th Anniversary of the LP series, Classic Records made an error: their first pressing of *Born to Run* omitted the original gatefold and enclosed a lyric sheet instead. To the company's

credit, they have corrected the gaffe and have re-pressed *Born To Run* with the lyrics printed on the gatefold (sticklers will still note at least one historical inaccuracy: as opposed to the original sleeve, John Landau's name is spelled correctly on the back). The vinyl itself is as tough as they come, at 180 grams.

On June 8, Epic is releasing *The Very Best of Grin* featuring Nils Lofgren. This collection includes two previously unreleased tracks and a non-LP B-side. Joined by brother Tom, Nils led Grin, which emerged from the D.C. area in the late '60s. 19 tracks compile the best of Nils' band.

—Drew Whittemore

For those who may have doubted how good the Asbury Park music scene was during its heyday of the mid-'70s to mid-'80s, check out the new anthology released by New Jersey-based Halycon Records, *The Spirit of Asbury Park: Rockin' the Jersey Shore*.

The label was behind the nostalgic reunions of New Jersey hard rockers T.T. Quick and Prophet a few years ago. This time out, Halycon has assembled 16 tracks from such Asbury Park legends as Cats on a Smooth Surface, the George Theiss Band, Sonny Kenn, and Norman Seldin.

"Misery Loves Company," by Norman Seldin & Friends, is most interesting, featuring E Streeters Garry Tallent, Max Weinberg, Danny Federici and Clarence Clemons (Clarence played with Seldin in the Joyful Noize before he joined the E Street Band). The track was recorded in 1978 between Bruce gigs.

The Spirit of Asbury Park is the first of a two-volume set of Jersey Shore rock stalwarts. "Our criteria is simple," says Rob Rizzi, owner of Asbury Park-based Halycon Records. "We wanted the best and that's what we got! Hopefully, all the fans around the world will agree."

—Robert Makin

the backstreets jukebox

1. Bruce Springsteen
18 Tracks
Columbia (CD)

2. Van Morrison
Back on Top
Virgin/Pointblank (CD)

3. Joan Armatrading
Love and Affection
A&M (Import 2CD)

4. Mike Ness
Cheating at Solitaire
Time Bomb (CD)

5. Various Artists
Postpunk Chronicles, Vol. 1-3
Rhino (CD)

6. Tom Waits
Mule Variations
Epitaph (CD)

7. Snares & Kites
Tricks of Trapping
Inbetweens (CD)

8. Julian Coryell
Bitter to Sweet
Mojo (CD)

9. Ted Hawkins
Suffer No More
Rhino (CD)

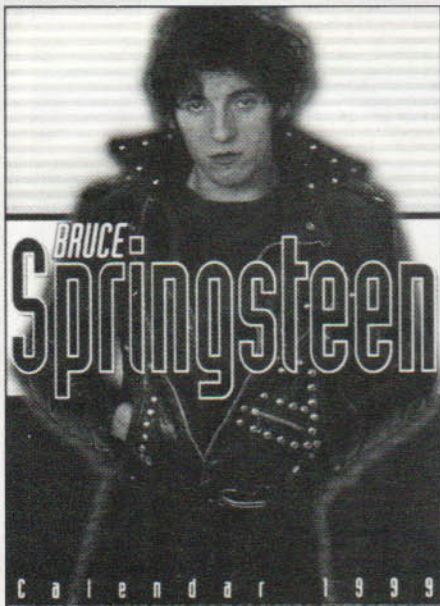
10. Frank Sinatra
Sinatra at the Sands
Reprise (CD)

10

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ALBUM IN STORES TUESDAY, JUNE 8



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SLIPS

ON THE SCREEN: Continuing his relationship with film director John Sayles, Bruce Springsteen has contributed a new song, "Lift Me Up," to *Limbo*, the new Sayles film slated to debut in May at the Cannes Film Festival and in the United States the following month. At press time, Springsteen is even rumored to be planning a stop at Cannes for the premiere. "Lift Me Up" features Springsteen singing throughout in a falsetto voice. It's a gorgeous song, and follows Springsteen's triumvirate of songs written for movies in the 1990s, "Streets of Philadelphia," "Dead Man Walkin'," and "Missing." Sayles, the director of *Lone Star* and *Baby It's You*, has also been behind the camera for Springsteen videos "Born in the U.S.A.," "I'm On Fire," and "Glory Days." A *Limbo* soundtrack is in the works. . . . Steve Van Zandt's role in *The Sopranos*, the critically acclaimed and popular HBO mini-series on Mafia life in New Jersey, isn't the drama's only connection to Bruce Springsteen. The season finale included a reference to *Tracks* (told by the FBI that they had something they wanted him to hear, Tony Soprano asks, "the Springsteen box set? I've already got it") and featured "State Trooper" at the end of the episode. Now if Tony could work on the Electric Nebraska tapes.

SEEDS: Plants grow better with Bruce. That's the apparent conclusion of British tomato growers, according to a report in the *Guardian*, a weekly newspaper. The Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" and Bruce's own "Dancing in the Dark" were among songs chosen by DJ Dave Cash for growers to use to help plants increase pollination. . . . We don't know about Mary Chapin Carpenter's green thumb, but her new single, "Almost Home," includes a live version of "Dancing in the Dark" as a B-side. . . . 18 *Tracks* debuted at #64 on the *Billboard* album chart, having sold 19,966 copies in the U.S. in its first week. It debuted at #9 in Sweden. . . . *Pollstar*, the trade publication of the concert industry, published the 20 highest-

grossing concerts in its 1998 recap. This time the number 18 is where Bruce and the E Street Band rank for their six-night run at Giants Stadium in 1985. The figures: 396,936 tickets sold, equaling a final gross of \$6,946,380. Ironically, the low ticket price of \$17.50 kept the stand from ranking higher; for number of tickets sold for a single series of shows at one venue, this stand comes in at first place. . . . Nils Lofgren and Steve Van Zandt are making the most of their nights off in Europe. In Zurich, the two guitarists joined Bob Dylan at Hallenstadion for a rousing "Not Fade Away."

MAKE IT TALK: For years, Bruce Springsteen has turned to Ocean Beach, New Jersey-based Phil Petillo to repair and modify his guitars. Petillo told the *Asbury Park Press* in April that he had customized "about 20" guitars for Springsteen, Van Zandt, Lofgren and Patti Scialfa to use on the 1999 tour. For Bruce's instruments, Petillo used the neck of Springsteen's 1953 Fender Esquire as a model to shape other Fenders, giving Bruce a consistent feel when he switches guitars. It may not be brain surgery, but Petillo has that covered: he also designs patented devices used to treat brain aneurysms. Check out this craftsman's web site: <http://www.naicinc.com/Petillopage1.htm>. . . . The *Newark Star-Ledger* reported that the Asbury Park High School football team, after having to forfeit a 6-0 season start last year because they fielded ineligible players, received a great show of support from the community. A number of gifts were sent from local businesses; among the donations: varsity jackets, courtesy of Bruce. . . . Jeff Tweedy, leader of the great band Wilco, recently told the web site Wall of Sound that



"Backstreets Jukebox" fave Kelly Willis, with subscriber Arlie Green

Springsteen was among artists that "have mattered to me to some degree in the past." Just how far back? Try fourth grade. "I took *Born to Run* to school and told my friends it was my band. I said 'this is the record I'm working on.'" Wilco's new album *Summer Teeth* was released in the winter. . . . Turning 80 and going strong is Jane Scott, the music writer for the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer*. To mark the occasion, the *Plain-Dealer* featured Scott in the April 30 edition. Her lustrous 35-year career has included many Springsteen shows, and she anoints the August 30, 1978 gig at Richfield Coliseum her favorite of all-time. "I also saw Bruce at the old Allen Theater in 1975 and said in my story, 'His name is Bruce Springsteen. And he will be a superstar.'"

GET UP, STAND UP: The Amnesty International concert held December 10 in Paris was shown on pay-per-view in the U.S. on April 3. A DVD of the concert, during which Springsteen performed a four-song acoustic set, will be distributed by Image Entertainment. The concert marked the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

and reunited Springsteen with his old Amnesty partners Tracy Chapman, Peter Gabriel, and Youssou N'Dour. . . . The May issue of *Discoveries* magazine features a Springsteen cover story by *Backstreets* editor Chris Phillips that runs down Bruce's 25 years of B-sides and rarities. . . . *People* magazine's 25th anniversary edition features a one-page picture of the "most intriguing" Springsteen, with a short paragraph that attempts to sum up Bruce's own 25-year career. . . . *Goldmine's* ranking of the top 25 rock LPs of the 1970s begins with *Born to Run*. . . . *Rolling Stone's* May 13, 1999 edition chronicles "The Essential Recordings of the '90s" and lavishes praise on *The Ghost of Tom Joad*: "Surveying an American landscape littered with crushed hopes, Springsteen stares down the darkness but fights it only to a draw. That a rocker of this magnitude would make a folk album this forlorn spits in the eye of the rising Dow." . . . President Clinton recently rallied the troops at Hanscom Field near Boston to build support for NATO attacks against Serbia. As he arrived and departed, "Born in the U.S.A." played over the loudspeakers. 🐉

—Jonathan B. Pont

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

25 YEARS of RECORDED HISTORY

PART FOUR: 1984-1998

1984

January - April

As 1984 dawns, Bruce Springsteen has recorded more than enough material with the E Street Band over the last two years for his seventh album. But that's never stopped him from recording more. With only a few club appearances interspersed, studio sessions continue in New York for the first few months of the year, the band cutting songs like "Man at the Top" on January 12 and "Rockaway the Days" on February 3.

Art director Andrea Klein and photographer Annie Leibovitz work with Bruce on a cover shoot in early February. Though *Murder Incorporated* has been circulating as a rumored album title, this photo shoot uses the American flag, to go along with the album's proposed lead-off track, "Born in the U.S.A." Bruce later tells Kurt Loder, "We took a lot of different types of pictures, and in the end, the picture of my ass looked better than the picture of my face, so that's what went on the cover. I didn't have any secret message."

As mixing continues through the next month, Bruce, Chuck Plotkin and Jon Landau finally reach a basic consensus on song selection. Or almost. One afternoon in March, in Springsteen's room at the Lyden House in New York City, Landau presents an argument that what the album needs is one more song: a first single, one that sums up Bruce's current state of mind.

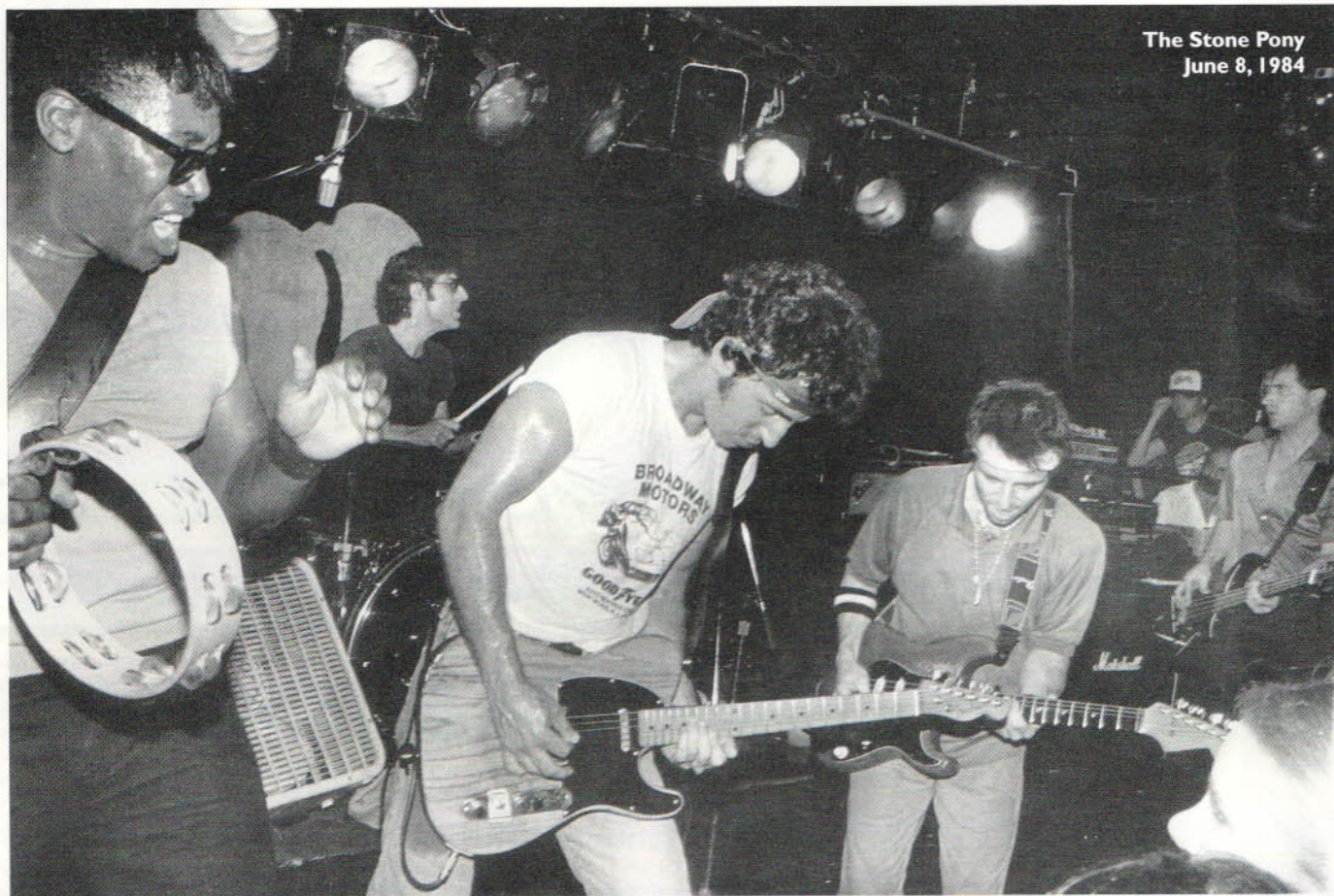
As Dave Marsh writes in *Glory Days*, "Springsteen balked, then exploded. 'Look,' he snarled, 'I've written 70 songs. You want another one, you write it.'" But in the wee small hours, Bruce picks up an acoustic guitar and begins writing "Dancing in the Dark"—just the kind of song Landau was looking for.

Springsteen records the song in late March with Roy Bittan, Max Weinberg, and Garry Tallent—Clarence Clemons' sax will be dubbed in later. It takes a few tries before the song takes shape in the studio. At first, as Weinberg later tells Craig Rosen, the band "recorded a real rock 'n' roll version of it. I remember sitting down at the drums after getting three or four takes of the rock version, and Jon Landau came over to me and whispered in my ear, 'Dance record.'"

Steve Van Zandt says much later, "I was gone by then. There would have been a big argument on that one if I'd been there. I'm glad I wasn't, because in the end it did help bring attention to the record." Van Zandt has not been present at the recent sessions, as he is readying his second album, *Voice of America*, and preparing for a tour of his own with the Disciples of Soul. Although an official press release won't come until May 29, Van Zandt announces his departure from the E Street Band in April.

By early April, master tapes are delivered to CBS, though the album title and packaging are still being worked out. Even the final track listing will change before the album is released as *Born in the U.S.A.*—packaging prototypes include "Pink Cadillac," without "No Surrender" and "I'm Goin' Down," which will be last-minute

BY CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS



The Stone Pony
June 8, 1984

additions. Leibovitz spends a day in April photographing the E Street Band; she shoots Bruce that night in his basement of his house in Rumson, NJ, as he dances alone to the new "Dancing in the Dark." A shot from this night will be used as the single's picture sleeve.

Springsteen has also been playing out in clubs this month, his traditional celebration of an album's completion. On April 22, for the third time in the last month, he joins Cats on a Smooth Surface to play the prescient "I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide." With the potential energy of the

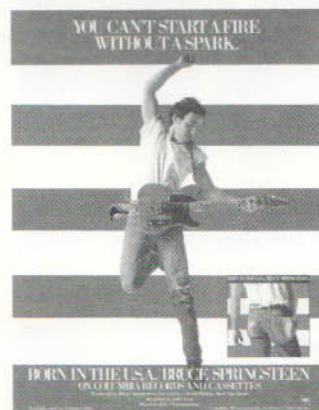
Born in the U.S.A. album practically leaping out of the grooves, the final consideration is whether Springsteen really wants to knowingly take this step. But as Bruce says in Marsh's *Glory Days*, "...my feeling was that I'd created an opportunity for myself and why cross the desert and not climb the mountain?"

May

The record company promotional machine gears up for one of the biggest album campaigns in history, adding to the tremendous buzz that already exists. On May 7, New York's WNEW jumps the gun and spins "Dancing in the Dark" until receiving a cease and desist telegram; this happens the next day across the U.S. The single is released on May 9.

Meanwhile, Springsteen has been visiting his parents on the West Coast, taking in Elvis Costello's solo show at San Francisco's Warfield Theater. He returns to begin tour rehearsals at the former Big Man's West in Red Bank. Still short a guitar player, Bruce calls Nils Lofgren to sit in at rehearsal. After a combination jam session/audition, Nils officially joins the E Street Band on May 15. On May 16, during MTV's premiere of the "Rosalita" video, opening concerts in the midwest are announced. Sell-outs the next day break records in some venues.

Springsteen's first live performance of "Dancing in the Dark" comes on May 26 with Bystander at an Asbury Park club. The song enters the Top 40 on the same day, where it spends nearly four months, going all the way to #2—but no higher, thanks to Prince's lock on the top spot with "When Doves Cry."



June

On June 4, *Born in the U.S.A.* is released, with 1.25 million copies shipped. It is the first album in two years to debut in the Top Ten, and within three weeks it hits #1. Not every review is positive; Richard Harrington writes in the *Washington Post*, "Springsteen's music, once torrential,

has turned into a cold drizzle that's deadly serious, but also deadly dull." John Piccarella writes in the *Village Voice*: "On the inner sleeve of *Born in the U.S.A.*, there's a picture of Bruce Springsteen up on his toes, doing his best to look like Michael Jackson. Whether intended or not, the pose sums up Springsteen's current career status. It's largely Jackson's success that's provided CBS with the capital to finance what's been called the most expensive and best-organized pre-release promotion effort ever for the new album. Having passed on the place he occupied nine years ago on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* to Jackson, Springsteen and/or his associates want to cash in on the years of accolades and hard work. This corporate, critical, and aesthetic merger illustrates the most confounding political issue in American rock and roll—how youth rebellion serves capitalism...."

But *Rolling Stone* gives the album a rare five-star rating, and glowing reviews are the norm as *Born in the U.S.A.* is quickly hailed as the most relevant and vital rock 'n' roll album in years. As J.D. Considine writes in the *Baltimore Sun*: "...Mr. Springsteen isn't coasting on the momentum of rock's history so much as using its shared experiences to add resonance to his vision of today. As a result, *Born in the U.S.A.* throws the



rock 'n' roll experience into high relief, demonstrating not only how it can express the psychic and even physical realities of a listener's life, but how, like any great art, it can illuminate and transform that life."

The E Street Band's first show since 1981—and Lofgren's first with them—comes on **June 8**, with a warm-up show at the Stone Pony. The twelve-song set include five from the new album. The band continue to prepare for the tour with dress rehearsals in Lititz, PA. After three rehearsals with them, and with only a few days before the first show, Patti Scialfa officially joins the E Street Band on **June 25**. Springsteen soon tells *Rolling Stone*, "Having a woman up there with us gives it more of a feeling of community."

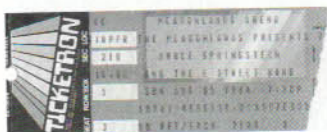
On **June 28**, the night before the tour begins, Springsteen and the band take the Civic Center stage in St. Paul, MN, to shoot footage for the "Dancing in the Dark" video, directed by Brian DePalma. Many in the assembled crowd had been given passes at a recent Rush concert. Actress Courtney Cox is "picked" out of the crowd to dance with Springsteen for the video, an act that will be repeated (sans the actress) every night on tour.

When the tour kicks off in St. Paul on **June 29**, "Dancing in the Dark" is performed twice for DePalma's cameras. The band's first full concert in three years has a few opening night problems with guitars and sound, and filming only adds to the snafus and delays. Jon Bream writes in the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* of the "ragged" concert: "Like most inaugural shows in any rock tour, this one was fat with material and poorly paced, the performance failing to gain momentum like the enthralling, transcendent concerts of old that made Springsteen rock's most vital and exciting performer for seven years." But any fears don't last long. After the second show in St. Paul, Bream writes that Bruce "reclaimed his title as the most vital and exciting performer in rock 'n' roll."

The *Born in the U.S.A.* tour brings the first live performances of songs from *Nebraska*, including five on opening night. Of the remarkable E Street Band versions, Bruce tells *Rolling Stone*'s Debby Miller, "I framed them a little with the band." Miller also writes that after the show "Springsteen was drained, but not as badly as back when he lived on fried chicken and Pepsi. He's a changed man: he eats vegetables, runs six miles a day, lifts weights. But, he said, 'I'm no fanatic. I still like to eat in diners.'" Backstage post-show interviews are rare, but they are sure to mention the smell of Ben Gay. After a two-year strength training and running regimen with personal trainer Phil Dunphy, who comes on

the road for the tour, the most immediately noted change in Springsteen since the *River* tour is his physique. Bruce later tells *USA Today*, "You've got to take care of yourself. The worst thing is getting onstage and not having your resources.... If you want to run well, you've got to use Hi-Test."

A 12-inch remix single of "Dancing in the Dark" is issued the same day as the opening show. Remixer Arthur Baker soon tells the *L.A. Times*, "When I first heard 'Dancing in the Dark,' I thought it was a great song, but I thought something was missing in the record.... I tried to give the record more dimension. I wanted to make it more like Bruce's old stuff—what I remember 'Born to Run' was like—with the fuller sound and the bells." Baker is working on a remix for "Cover Me" and says, "If the Springsteen fans got upset at 'Dancing,' wait til they hear this."



July - September

After the opening stand ends on **July 2**, the tour continues throughout North America through the end of the year. On **July 7**, *Born in the U.S.A.* bumps Huey Lewis and the News' *Sports* out of #1, a spot Bruce will hold for seven weeks until Prince and the Revolution's *Purple Rain* takes over. The "Dancing in the Dark" video premieres on **July 25**. On **July 30** and **31** the band plays Detroit, where Bruce tells Chet Flippo after the show, "Man, this was a four-and-a-half tonight." He explains: "I usually lose between three and five pounds during a show. This felt like a four-point-five."

Beginning **August 5** are homecoming shows at the Meadowlands, with ten shows in 16 days and a total of 202,027 tickets, sold out. Little Steven and the Miami Horns guest on **August 20**, including a remarkable encore of Dobie Gray's "Drift Away." The average show is now top-

ping 30 songs; the band plays 33 songs this last night at the Meadowlands. Bruce tells a journalist that he has cut back on the six-mile runs. "Cover Me," the album's second single, enters the Top 40 on **August 18** and soon peaks at #7.

After the conservative (and clueless, by his own admission) George Will sees a late **August** show in Landover, MD, his **September 13** syndicated column is titled "A Yankee Doodle Springsteen." Will writes: "I have not got a clue about Springsteen's politics, if any, but flags get waved at his concerts while he sings songs about hard times. He is no whiner, and the recitation of closed factories and other problems always seems punctuated by a grand, cheerful affirmation: 'Born in the U.S.A.'"

After Will's endorsement, President Reagan's reelection staff reportedly tries to enlist Springsteen for a campaign appearance, and Reagan drops his name in Jersey. At a **September 19** campaign rally the President tells a crowd in Hammonton, NJ: "America's future rests in a thousand dreams inside our hearts; it rests in the message of hope in songs of a man so many young Americans admire: New Jersey's own Bruce Springsteen!"

A Columbia Records publicist's comment is, "We know what Mr. Reagan said. We haven't had a chance to get in touch with Bruce." But Bruce has surely heard, because he makes his politics more explicit at the next stop in Pittsburgh. Introducing "Johnny 99" on **September 21**, he tells the crowd: "I kinda got to wondering what Reagan's favorite album of mine is. I don't think it's this one." A few intense songs from *Nebraska* make his case. And on **September 22**: "It's a long walk from a government that is supposed to represent all the people to where we are today." The first leg ends a few days later on **September 25** in Buffalo. But these events mark a turning point in Springsteen's activism—for the rest of the tour and the rest of his career—as he begins making his political stance more clear onstage, donating time on stage and money

from the shows to support the local causes he believes in. His audience is encouraged, in every sense of the word, to pitch in.

October - December

Walter Mondale tries jumping on the bandwagon from the other side on **October 1**, telling a NJ rally, "Bruce may have been born to run, but he wasn't born yesterday." The following day, **October 2**, Springsteen's management issues a statement: "Bruce has not, and has no intention of endorsing any political candidate."

The tour's second leg starts in Vancouver, B.C., on **October 15** and heads down the West Coast. Over seven nights in L.A., Bruce is introduced to model/actress Julianne Phillips backstage. At the **October 31** Sports Arena show he presents Danny Federici with a washing machine in honor of his 15th anniversary with the band.

Also in Los Angeles, filmmaker John Sayles shoots live footage to use in the video for "Born in the U.S.A.," the third single released on **November 5**. The tour works its way east through the South this month, and on **November 24**, "Born in the U.S.A." enters the Top 40, where it will become the album's third Top-Ten single. On **December 7**, the band plays the Leon County Civic Center in Tallahassee, FL, where the Detroit Medley includes the only performance of "Tallahassee Lassic."

On **December 17**, Springsteen and the band play their last show of 1984 in Atlanta, GA, closing with "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." The **December 20** issue of *Rolling Stone* sums up the year of the Boss: "Bruce Springsteen's seventh album made him the mass-appeal, mainstream star his critical claque has always claimed he could be. There are precious few nits to pick here: *Born in the U.S.A.* is simply the most stirring and stylistically cohesive rock record the man has made...." That record has now sold 5 million copies, with no sign of stopping, and the tour isn't even half over.



The 1984-model E Street Band

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January - February

A short third U.S. leg opens in Hampton, VA, on **January 4**. Arthur Baker's third remix single is released on **January 10** with the "Freedom Mix" of "Born in the U.S.A." At the end of the month, two nights in Syracuse, NY, bring the U.S. tour to a close. Since last June, the tour of North America has played 94 shows in 45 cities. These **January 26** and **27** concerts also serve to launch the next wave of stadium shows, as the Carrier Dome is the largest venue Bruce has played to this point and the band's first stadium-sized venue. With 39,000 in attendance each night, more people see the Syracuse shows than saw the entire *Born to Run* tour.

The band has roughly 2 months off before the tour resumes, but Springsteen flies to L.A. immediately after the Syracuse shows to sing a song written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie. After the American Music Awards on **January 28** (Bruce did not attend, but "Dancing in the Dark" won Best Pop/Rock Single), the "We Are the World" recording session is held at A&M Records studio. Richie's manager tells *Rolling Stone*, "The turning point was Bruce Springsteen's commitment. That legitimized the project in the eyes of the rock community." Bob Geldof describes the goal of the project as simply "to get food to people," and as Bruce says this night, "Any time somebody asks you to take one night of your time to help people who are starving to death, it's pretty hard to say no." The all-star session goes well into **January 29**, with Bruce recording his solo part around 5:30 in the morning. Lionel Richie later talks about Springsteen to *Playboy*: "I dug him the most. That's because he's business. I didn't have to worry about making him the prima donna. He came in the door and said, 'I came here to do this. Just tell me where to go and I've got it, buddy.'"



Born in the U.S.A.'s fourth single, "I'm on Fire," is released on **February 4**. In this first week of February, Springsteen is on the cover of *People*, *Rolling Stone* and *TV Guide*. He is referenced everywhere from comic strips to soap operas to professional wrestling theme songs; he is one of *Good Housekeeping's* 50 most eligible bachelors. That eligibility comes into question, however, as millions see Bruce attending the Grammys on **February 26** with Julianne Phillips. Though "Dancing in the Dark" wins the Grammy for Best Rock Male Vocal, it is off-camera, and Springsteen is otherwise shut out; Lionel Richie wins Album of the Year. *Rolling Stone's* **February 28** issue tells a different story. It's practically a clean sweep of the 1984 Music Awards for Springsteen, with nine awards including Artist, Band and Album of the Year from both readers and critics.

March - May

"I'm on Fire" enters the Top 40 on **March 2** and goes to #6. John Sayles directs the video, which was going to be live footage from Syracuse, but now becomes Springsteen's acting debut. Sayles donates his entire \$10,000 directing fee to aid Sandinistas in Nicaragua. In the second week of March, Bruce and the band stop over in Honolulu on their way to Australia to both relax and rehearse. Lionel Richie later tells *Playboy*, "After [the 'We are the World' session] was all over, I was vacationing in Hawaii and Bruce was there on his way to Australia for a tour. I called up and said, 'Hey, I'm here,' and we spent the afternoon hanging out, partying. He is so cool. We sat on the beach, just the two of us—no guards, nothing."

Bruce and the band arrive in Sydney on **March 18**, and on **March 21** they start the Pacific Rim leg with eight shows in Australia, their first ever Down Under. At a Brisbane show, Bruce has the audience raise their hands during "Twist and Shout," and Max Weinberg later tells *Rolling Stone*: "They were so tightly packed together, they couldn't get their hands down. They were standing there in front of us, waving their hands. I felt, 'Wow, this must have been what Beatlemania was like.'"

Their first shows in Japan begin on **April 10** in Tokyo and are shorter than usual—due to fire regulations, the band isn't permitted to play past 10 p.m. On **April 15**, Julianne Phillips arrives in Tokyo for the rest of the leg, through **April 22** in



Osaka. She and Springsteen head to Hawaii together on April for a vacation on **April 25**.

According to Marsh's *Glory Days*, shortly after returning to California the two decided to get married; they announce it to Springsteen's family over dinner on May 5. Talking to *Rolling Stone*, Clarence Clemons recalls Hawaii, where Springsteen was godfather for the christening of Clemons' third son: "When [Bruce] was holding the kid, I looked into his eyes and thought, 'Well, he's gone.' Two weeks later he called me up and said, 'Big Man, I'm gettin' married.' I said, 'I know.'" On **May 13**, after managing to mislead the hordes of paparazzi that have invaded Oregon, Springsteen and Phillips are married in a candlelight ceremony at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Oswego, OR, at 12:15 a.m. In the wedding party are Van Zandt, Clemons and Landau. The **May 15** reception is attended by the full E Street Band—and by intruding news helicopters.

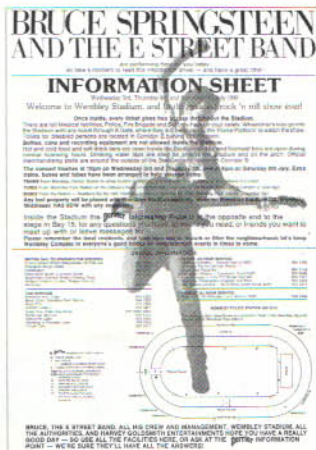
"Glory Days" becomes the fifth single on **May 22**, and with only a week before the band's European tour is to begin, they make a third video with John Sayles. The shoot takes place at a construction site and baseball field in West New York on **May 24**; at a house in Secaucus on Memorial Day, **May 27**; and at Maxwell's in Hoboken, NJ on **May 28** for lip-synch performance footage. Little Steven joins in on the last day, and Bruce's wife of less than two weeks also makes a cameo. At the end of the month, Springsteen and the E Street Band leave for the first European shows of the tour, nearly a year after the album's release.

June - August

For the summer stadium tour, every venue holds at least 50,000—but the first European show on **June 1** is especially massive. At Slane Castle in Dublin, Ireland, at least 70,000 fans attend (with estimates running up to 100,000). Irish police set up roadblocks en route to the castle to prevent rioting. After riots at a previous Bob Dylan concert there, villagers

originally voted against allowing Bruce to play. After 38 soccer fans die in a riot at a match in Brussels two days before Springsteen's show, concerns are especially high. Landau will later tell local press that this crowd was the wildest they had ever played to, but other than fans fainting from the heat, the event is tragedy-free. Joe Breen writes in *Rolling Stone*, "By playing such huge venues, it seems, Springsteen has had to sacrifice two of the most important elements of his live shows—total contact with and control of his audience. He compensated for that by delivering a high-energy, hard-rocking performance. Ably assisted by the E Street Band, Springsteen steam-rolled the audience into submission.... The Boss and his band were back in Europe and back in big business."

Back in the U.S., "Glory Days" enters the Top 40 on **June 8** and will go to #5. The tour hits stadiums throughout Europe for the rest of June, reaching the U.K. on **July 3** for three shows at Wembley. The U.K. dates include such treats as the debut of "Seeds," an acoustic "Independence Day" played on **July 4**, and a few visits from Little Steven. In the London press, Bruce is called everything from "King Steen" to "Loose Windscreens." The European leg comes to a close on **July 7** in Leeds.



As Springsteen and the Band head home for a month off, *Billboard* reports that *Born in the U.S.A.* is now the biggest selling album in Columbia history, with more than 7.5 million copies sold in the U.S. and 11 million worldwide. The album, now at #6 on the charts, has just spent 53 weeks in the top 5. A Columbia executive tells *Billboard*, "Bruce is now close to that total acceptance with pop, adult, country and black listeners that Elton John and the Bee Gees had. Even the most conservative [Adult Contemporary] stations get behind him now.... We've put a tremendous amount of money and resources behind Bruce, and you can take it to the bank that this will go to

10 million."

According to *Rolling Stone*, Springsteen had been concerned about losing intimacy and good sound with the move to stadiums. But as Garry Tallent points out, "there was a time when Bruce didn't want to go into arenas because of the same argument. We had to take the shot. Some intimacy was lost, but there was something to replace it—the event itself. We pulled it off." The show has had to change a little to accommodate huge venues, with more structure to the set—and a different wardrobe. Danny tells *Rolling Stone*, "We'd wear more vivid colors so we could be seen. I remember telling Garry, 'That shirt's a little too busy; they won't see you in the back.'" To adapt to the stadiums, Springsteen has also added a long lower ramp to the stage and two large Diamond Vision video screens on either side.

The critical reaction is mixed. J.D. Considine later writes of the stadium shows in *Record*: "OK, so he's still the best concert performer in rock. That's no excuse for bad sound (feedback throughout the show), ritualistic staging, inadequate projection TV and reckless pacing. Seeing Springsteen in a stadium was altogether too much like seeing a favorite movie in its TV incarnation."

But drawbacks of a stadium show have no effect on ticket sales—"Boss Fever" has only increased in the U.S. since January. 52,000 seats for the home-stretch opener in Washington, D.C., sell out in 90 minutes on July 22. An AT&T representative describes it as a "mass calling situation"; others call it Boss Monday. Phone lines are jammed by several million calls from fans trying to get tickets, disrupting service in D.C. and five mid-Atlantic states for several hours. According to the *Washington Post*, "White House spokesman Larry Speakes cited Springsteen ticket calls as the reason reporters had trouble reaching the press office. But he said White House communications were not affected. 'We have ways to get around it.'" On August 5, the stadium tour hits the U.S. with the show at R.F.K. Stadium. With 28 dates in 14 cities—every one but Los Angeles selling out—on this last leg alone the band will play to two million people in nine weeks.

August 18 is the beginning of a homecoming stretch at Giants Stadium. "Whenever I come to New Jersey, it's family night," Bruce tells the crowd. "All my relatives are here to see if I'm behaving myself." Apparently he's behaving quite well, as John Rockwell writes in the *New York Times*: "Let us not pussyfoot around this. Bruce Springsteen's opening-night New York-area concert at Giants Stadium here Sunday—nearly four hours of it, counting a 40-minute intermission—was a flat-out,

"Beneath peaceful skies": The 1985 stadium tour



unqualified triumph. It was even better than the remarkable show that Springsteen and his E Street Band offered here just over a year ago, in the Brendan Byrne Arena right across the parking lot."

Little Steven has been spending the summer working on a song called "Sun City," his outraged reaction to a trip to South Africa. At sessions throughout the summer he and Arthur Baker have gotten rappers and rock artists to contribute. By this point, Springsteen has heard the demo. When the August 30 Jersey show is postponed, Bruce goes to meet Steve at Shakedown studios in New York to pitch in for the song. Steve guests the next night for a nine-song encore at Giants Stadium.

September - December

On September 6 in Indianapolis, John Cougar Mellencamp meets Bruce—and sees him perform—for the first time. He later tells *Rolling Stone*, "I remember saying to one magazine, 'I can't wait until I meet Bruce Springsteen so I can tell him what a problem he's been for me.' So when I met him at that show, I told him. He acted like he was my big brother, which was nice. He said he really liked 'Pink Houses.' And I said, 'Well, I stole it all from you.' We laughed and shook hands."

On September 14, the sixth single from the album, "I'm Goin' Down," cracks the Top 40 and will later peak at #9. The band is in Dallas, playing the Cotton Bowl, where they are

attacked by crickets—getting in their hair, shirts and drum kit. After dealing with temperature extremes at other shows in September, Max Weinberg calls the end of this leg "the Pestilence Tour."

Los Angeles is the final stand, beginning September 27. While in L.A., Springsteen has dinner with Paul Schrader, from whom he swiped the "Born in the U.S.A." title. Bruce says he'll give him a new song to make up for it if Schrader still wants to make the movie. Both the song and movie will be called "Light of Day."

The final show of the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour is on October 2 at the Los Angeles Coliseum. Bruce pulls Julianne up for "Dancing in the Dark": "I always save the last dance for her." Before an encore of "This Land is Your Land," Bruce tells the crowd, "This has been the greatest year of my life, and I wanna thank you for making me feel like the luckiest man in the world." The "Glory Days" finale includes Jon Landau on guitar. Weinberg tells *Rolling Stone*, "On the last night I cried. There's a video clip that I saw on *Entertainment Tonight*. We were all lined up, and I can see tears in my eyes. When Bruce was singing 'Glory Days,' and he turned around and

said, 'Boys, we're going home now,' it really struck home."

In the wee hours of October 3, at the Sunset Marquis hotel in West Hollywood, there is plenty to celebrate. Over the last year-and-a-half, Springsteen and the E Street Band have played to almost five million people on four continents, 156 shows in eleven countries. Bruce has donated \$1.5 million to local unions, food banks, and Vietnam veterans' groups. He has been on the cover of

practically every national magazine. 13 million copies of *Born in the U.S.A.* have been sold worldwide.

Patrick Humphries later quotes Springsteen reflecting on this period: "The *Born in the U.S.A.* experience obviously had its frightening moments. But I was 35, and I had a real solid sense of myself by that time. With *Born in the U.S.A.* I had a chance to relive my 1975 experience when I was

calm and completely prepared and went for it."

As Cheech and Chong's "Born in East L.A." hits the airwaves this month, Bruce and Julianne remain in town after the tour. On October 17, a letter is sent to Bruce from a union leader about the Freehold 3M plant that is going to be closed next year, a



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND



plea for help with a public campaign against the shutdown. Bruce and Willie Nelson will soon take out full-page ads in numerous papers to bring attention to the issue.

"My Hometown" is planned as the seventh single from the album; a live version of "War" is originally considered as the B-side. But when Landau sends the song on cassette to Bruce in November, he also includes live cuts of "Born in the U.S.A.," "Seeds," and "The River," along with a note suggesting a live album. By the end of the tour, there had been talk of a live set, even from band members. As Marsh quotes Bruce in *Glory Days*: "I was against it. I never listened to any live tapes, really, and it just seemed like you were rehashing things... But he sent me down that tape, and that was when I started to think that maybe there was something to it." So "War" is saved for later.

On November 15, episode #176 ("So You Want to Be a Rock and Roll Star") of *Diff'rent Strokes* airs, featuring Clarence as Arnold Drummond's saxophone teacher. A performance video for "My Hometown" premieres on November 19, and the single soon follows on November 21. "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" has been chosen as the B-side, with perfect timing for Christmas. On December 21 the single enters the Top 40 and soon goes to #6, tying Michael Jackson's record of seven Top Ten singles from one album. Throughout this month, Springsteen and Landau are seriously discussing a live record, and around Christmas, Landau sends Chuck Plotkin a tape of what will become side one. Plotkin prepares himself.

As another big year draws to a close, Springsteen even makes it into outer space, as the U.S. Space Shuttle crew is woken up one morning to "Born in the U.S.A." *People* magazine reports, "Levi's revenues from its 501 jeans went up 26 percent this year, and they admit the Boss had something to do with it." The *National Enquirer* predicts triplets for Bruce in 1986.

1986

January - May

Record magazine's 1985 Critic's Choice Poll has Bruce Springsteen as artist of the year. J.D. Considine writes, "Who else, after all, could endure the uncomprehending adoration of a nation and nonetheless emerge with his sense of purpose intact? More to the point, how many other artists could support the fervor of so many fans-come-lately while still managing to mean something to his older audience?" The same poll also has Springsteen as Biggest Hype ("But it wasn't his fault!"). Bruce sweeps *Rolling Stone's* Music Awards again, including Artist of the Year, Best Male Singer and Best Live Performance in both readers' and critics' polls.

In early January, Springsteen joins the Jersey Artists for Mankind sessions, recording "We Got the Love" to benefit the community Food Bank of New Jersey. The song is co-written by Bobby Bandiera, co-produced by Garry Tallent, with guests also including Max, Nils, Clarence, Southside, John Eddie—more than 450 Jersey musicians at the Stone Pony. On January 19, Bruce returns to the Pony with a pared down E Street Band to benefit workers at the 3M plant in Freehold: "I'm here to say that I think after 25 years of service from a community, there is a debt owed to the 3M workers and to my hometown."

On February 1, *Born in the U.S.A.* drops out of the top ten after a record-breaking 85 weeks. Springsteen turns down an eight-figure offer (reportedly \$12 million) from Lee Iacocca to license "Born in the U.S.A." to Chrysler. After the 3M benefit, Springsteen spends much of the year out of the public eye, with work picking up on the live album. He goes to meet Plotkin in L.A., where they spend the next couple of months going through tapes of at least 30 shows, and they soon start making song selections at Bruce's house. Plotkin later tells Dave Marsh, "Six hours a day, five days a week... It was an enormous amount of work and it was easy as hell." Once enough songs are picked, Landau flies out for sequencing. By late March, the songs and running order are set. April and May are spent at the Record Factory in L.A. and the Hit Factory in New York, reviewing masters and adding overdubs.

June - October

Mixing for the live album takes place from June to October with Bob Clearmountain at the Right Track studio in New York. A five-LP set is rumored, but Springsteen and company are playing it close to the vest, not even officially notifying CBS until mid-summer. A live box set is finally officially announced on September 11. As work continues preparing this collection of 40 songs from a decade of E Street Band performances, Springsteen begins readying a very different kind of show. After rehearsing with Lofgren and Federici for two days in New York, the three go to Mountain View, CA, to play Neil Young's Bridge School

Benefit on October 13. Bruce takes the Shoreline Amphitheater stage alone, and after performing a cappella "You Can Look," he introduces a new solo arrangement of "Born in the U.S.A.": "This is a song about a snake that comes around to eat its tail." This marks the beginning of an effort to reclaim the song's misinterpretation that will last years. Springsteen brings out Danny on accordion and Nils on acoustic

guitar for Bruce's first all-acoustic set since the early '70s, including a closing "Hungry Heart" with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. *Backstreets* reports: "It was one of the most exuberant and genuine performances in years, and proof enough that despite how knocked out of whack everything has gotten these past few years, Bruce Springsteen is still a performer that can take risks.... Seeing Springsteen after the show as ebullient and blissful as he has ever looked, it would come as no surprise to hear that Bruce planned to take his solo show on the road, to small halls, to small towns." It will be another nine years before that happens.

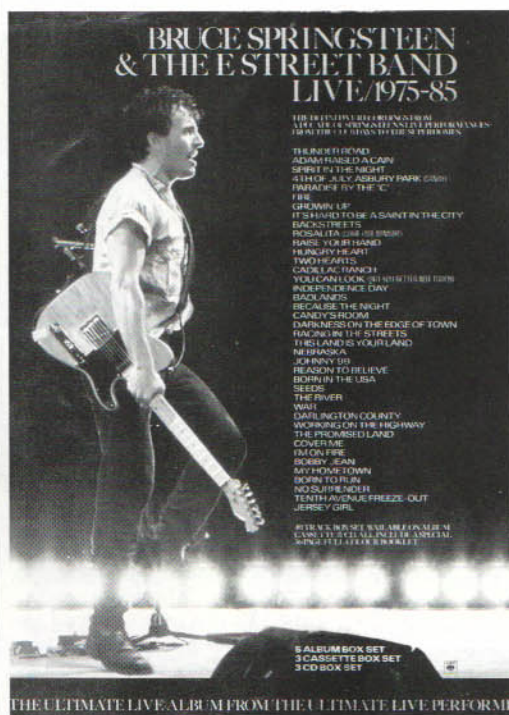
After the Bridge show, Springsteen joins Julianne in Paris, as *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band: Live/1975-85* nears release and the anticipation mounts. The box set has the largest advance order ever, at 1.5 million copies, with 300,000 on compact disc. On October 30, a truck in Italy carrying 10-15,000 copies of *Live* is hijacked on its way to Milan.



November - December

The box hits on November 10. A *Billboard* survey finds that many retailers around the country sell out that day and reorder immediately. In a selling frenzy, some stores even sell the box below cost. *Billboard* quotes one distributor: "Nobody has seen anything like this since the madness when Elvis died. It's the craziest I've seen it since then. I wish I had a pressing plant." Springsteen flies into New York from Paris that morning, and according to *Q* magazine—in the midst of the madness, with fans taking off work to stand in long lines at record stores—Springsteen and a friend grab some food at McDonalds and go see a movie.

Stephen Holden reviews the box in the *New York Times*, calling it "...an unprecedented event in popular recording. A three-and-a-half-hour, 40-song career summary, recorded over a 10-year period in clubs, concert halls and stadiums across the United States, it is the sort of anthology one expects to be released late in a performer's career, or posthumously.... the album is the pop-record equivalent of an epic American novel, its story told in the ungram-



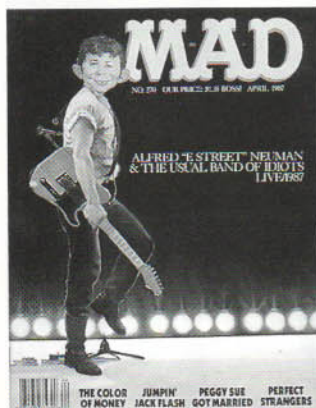


matical, rough-hewn vocabulary of rock.... *Live/1975-85* brings to a magnificent synthesis just about all the impulses that have fueled rock music since it surfaced in the mid-'50s as a mass cultural movement. You can get caught up in the visceral charge of its engines, sing along with its chunky tunes and dream its romantic dreams and still feel the cold wind of the history blowing through its pages."

Not all the reviews are positive, noting the relative lack of covers and early performances. Though noting that from any other artist this would be "an embarrassment of riches," *Rolling Stone's* review by David Fricke begins with three words: "It's not enough."

"Not enough" proves to be a real problem in another way, as there is soon a serious shortage of product. *Billboard* reports CBS's claim that by November 14, reorders have matched the pre-release orders of 1.5 million copies. CDs are particularly in demand, even from those who don't yet own a player. A Tower VP tells *Billboard*, "We're issuing rain checks, as they did for the Cabbage Patch craze."

"War"—now an A-side—is the first single from the box, which enters the Top 40 on November 29 and soon goes to #8. The same day, *Live/1975-85* debuts on the charts at number one—the first album in more than 10 years (and only the fourth in the rock era) to do so. This also makes Springsteen the first artist with three number one albums in the '80s. By the end of the year, the box has sold around 3.5 million copies.



1987

January - February

In *Rolling Stone's* 1986 Music Awards, Bruce is Artist of the Year for the third year in a row, with the box set the Album of the Year. On January 21, Bruce is decked out in a gold satin suit to induct Roy Orbison into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: "In 1970," Springsteen says, "I rode for 15 hours in the back of a U-Haul truck to open for Roy Orbison at the Nashville Music Festival. It was a summer night and I was 20 years old and he came out in dark glasses, a dark suit and he played some dark music.... When I went into the studio to make *Born to Run*, most of all I wanted to sing like Roy Orbison. I'll always remember what he means to me... what he meant to me when I was young and afraid of love." Springsteen performs with Orbison and during the ceremony's closing jam, which will become nearly an annual tradition for Bruce. Orbison later tells *Rolling Stone*, "I was really cool until I had to stand on the side of the stage during Bruce's speech. He said so many nice things, I didn't know what to say."

For his next studio album, Springsteen has tried sessions both in L.A. (with country musicians) and in New York, but it is right around the induction that he moves the recording into his house and begins the work that will become his next album. As he later writes in *Songs*: "I set up my recording equipment above my garage in Rumson, New Jersey, and began demo-ing. I wanted to get back to the intimacy of home recording.... The songs for *Tunnel of Love* came out of a single place in a short period of time. The songs and the record happened very fast. Most of the recording was done over the course of three weeks."

Recording continues into February, including "The Wish" and "The Honeymooners," both on February 22, and Springsteen soon calls Weinberg to contribute. Max later tells Craig Rosen, "He said that he was making these tapes and asked me if I could come over and put some drums on."

March - September

By March, *Live/1975-85* is by far the best-selling box ever, but problems arise as sales slow drastically after the huge initial demand. The set falls off the charts rapidly, and CBS puts a moratorium on returns. *Rolling Stone* reports: "Close to three-quarter of a

million copies... are beginning to gather dust at record stores around the country." "Fire" is the first single since 1978 to miss the Top 40.

Max works on the new record with Bruce, Toby Scott and Chuck Plotkin for several months. While other E Street Band members will contribute, Weinberg is the most prominent, drumming on eight of *Tunnel's* eventual 12 tracks: "I basically replaced all the pre-recorded [drum machine] tracks with real drums. It was Bruce's first record that he had done that way and he was really having a great time."

Springsteen is still recording new material in April, cutting "Lucky Man" on April 4. On April 12, Bruce takes a break for Max's birthday to jam with some E Streeters for his first Stone Pony appearance in over a year. "Light of Day" is debuted live, and Jon Bon Jovi guests with the band for one song. The ticket price is \$4.

On July 29, Bruce appears with Jah Love at Key Largo in Belmar, NJ for reggae takes on "Born in the U.S.A." and "My Hometown." This will be the first of ten club appearances over the next month, and a good sign that the new album is on its way. A press release is issued August 12, and *USA Today* breaks

the news the following day: "A new Bruce Springsteen album, *Tunnel of Love*, will be out late next month." September 25 finds Bruce singing "Stand By Me" with U2 at J.F.K. Stadium in Philly. On September 30 in L.A., he is part of an all-star backing band for Roy Orbison—including Tom Waits, Elvis Costello, Jackson Browne, and Bonnie Raitt—filmed for Cinemax. Though the first single is released in September, it is not until early the following month that *Tunnel of Love* hits stores.

October - December

"Brilliant Disguise" becomes a Top 40 single on October 3, soon going to number five on the charts. Only 11 months after Springsteen's last album release, *Tunnel of Love* ships double platinum on October 6. Bruce tells *Newsweek's* Bill Barol, "For ten or 15 years I wrote about the man in the car. This is about the man in the house." Jay Cocks writes in *Time*: "...It is a record Springsteen has staked a lot on. It follows no formulas and does not provide what many fans may first expect. But right now, anyhow, it sounds like the best record he has ever made.... Love hurts, love haunts, love heals in these

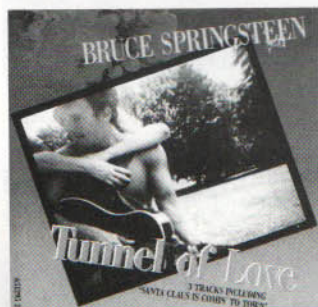


songs. The title cut suggests an amusement-park romp but ends with the kind of lyric reflection that is perfectly plainspoken and impossible to shake: "The house is haunted and the ride gets rough/And you've got to learn to live with what you can't rise above/If you want to ride on down in through this tunnel of love." Raymond Carver, take a turn around the floor with Chuck Berry...."

Steve Pond reviews the record in *Rolling Stone*: "So Bruce Springsteen met a girl, fell in love, got married and made an album of songs about meeting a girl, falling in love and getting married. And if you think it's that cut and dried, you don't know Springsteen. Far from being a series of hymns to cozy domesticity, *Tunnel of Love* is an unsettled and unsettling collection of hard looks at the perils of commitment. A decade or so ago, Springsteen acquired a reputation for romanticizing his subject matter. Now he doesn't even romanticize romance. *Tunnel of Love* is precisely the right move for an artist whose enormous success gloriously affirmed the potential of arena rock 'n' roll but exacted a toll on the singer...."

That this record is "the right move" doesn't escape many impressed critics. As Richard Harrington writes in the *Washington Post*: "It's not that Springsteen is the first writer to address the confusions of the heart... but putting out such an introspective and intimate collection on the heels of the hard-charging *Born in the U.S.A.* and the heroically structured *Live* set is an intriguing move. It contains some of Springsteen's most personal work and could very well provide the demythologizing he must crave...." A headline in an Irish paper sums it up nicely: "Bruce Regains His Credibility."

John Hammond passes away this month, and on October 22, Bruce pays tribute with an acoustic "Forever Young" at Hammond's memorial service at St. Peter's Church in NYC. On October 28, the "Brilliant Disguise" video premieres on MTV, directed by Meiret Avis earlier this month and shot on a soundstage made up to look like Bruce's kitchen.



For this song about deception, the single camera shot slowly moves in for an extreme close-up—Avis says, "one of the things really good liars do is look you in the face"—as Bruce sings the vocal live.

The E Street Band has been rehearsing the latter part of this month at McLoone's Rumrunner, and, nearing midnight on October 31, Bruce and the band come out on stage wearing masks, for a Halloween crowd who had paid \$3 each for a local band. This marks the live debut of songs from the new album, as well as the first acoustic version of "Born to Run," which will resurface on the tour next year.

On November 7, its third week on the chart, *Tunnel of Love* reaches #1, knocking out Michael Jackson's *Bad*. Bruce is bumped to #2 the following week by the *Dirty Dancing* soundtrack, but he is now the only artist to have four number one albums in the '80s. A video for the second single is filmed this month, partly in the Casino on the Asbury Park boardwalk. "Tunnel of Love" is released in late November.

On December 7, Harry Chapin is posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in a tribute at Carnegie Hall. Springsteen plays "Remember When the Music" and shares some fond and funny reminiscences of Chapin's influence on him: "He said one thing I'll always remember. He said, 'Gee, you know, I play one night for me, and one night for the other guy.' And later on when I was trying to put my music to some pragmatic use, I remembered what he said. Not being bent on extremism, I wasn't as generous as he was. But he's probably laughing, laughing right now."

Less than a week later, on December 13, Bruce is back on stage to play Paul Simon's Madison Square Garden benefit for homeless children. He backs Dion on "Teenager in Love," and again performs the acoustic "Born to Run": "I wrote this song about 15 years ago. It's about a boy and a girl that thought they wanted to run and keep running and never stop. And at the time I thought that was me and maybe it was. But I woke up one morning and realized that I wanted a home. And nobody wants or deserves to be homeless."

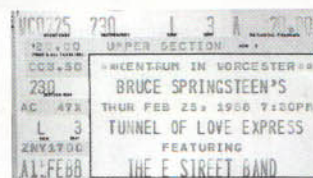
"Tunnel of Love" enters the Top 40 on December 19, and becomes Springsteen's tenth Top-Ten single in a row, peaking at #9. Though the band has rehearsed material together, no tour plans have been announced, even to band members. On December 25, Bruce begins making the calls.

1988

January - February

On January 3, the Roy Orbison concert Springsteen played last September airs as *A Black and White Night*. Ending his three-year run, Springsteen isn't picked as Artist of the year in *Rolling Stone's* Music Awards, but critics pick him as Best Songwriter, *Tunnel of Love* as best album and the title track as Best Single. On January 20, Springsteen returns to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremonies to induct Bob Dylan, telling the Waldorf-Astoria audience, "The first time that I heard Bob Dylan I was in the car with my mother and on came that snare shot that sounded like somebody had kicked open the door to your mind: 'Like a Rolling Stone.' Bob's voice somehow thrilled and scared me, it made me feel kind of irresponsibly innocent, and it still does. The way Elvis freed your body, Bob freed your mind and showed us that just because the music was innately physical did not mean that it was anti-intellect." The *Washington Post* calls it "the annual Bruce Springsteen Memorial Induction Anecdote." Rehearsals for a tour begin in earnest this month, with all of the E Street Band as well as a horn section made up of Mario Cruz, Ed Manion, Mike Spengler, Mark Pender, and Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg. The rehearsals take place on an army base in the swamps of Jersey, where "the first thing I did," as Bruce later tells Steve Pond, "was make everyone stand in a different place."

Tour dates are announced in early February, and the *River*-era outtake "Roulette" is finally officially released as the B-side to "One Step Up." On February 15, filming for the video for the third single takes place at the Wonder Bar in Asbury Park. The *Tunnel of Love Express* Tour opens on

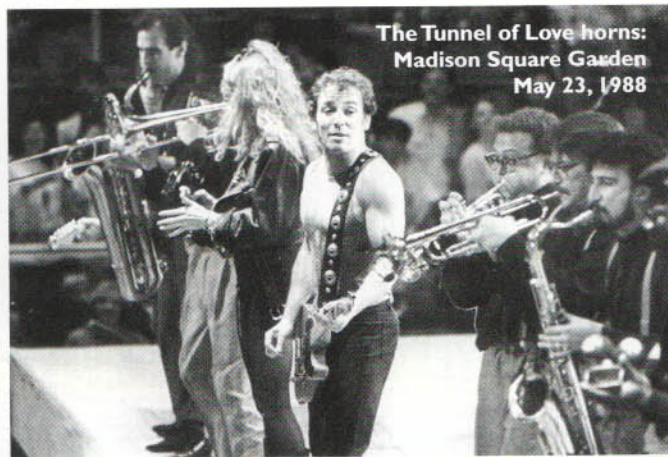


February 25 in Worcester, MA. Back in arenas, these shows will seem comparatively intimate after the last stadium tour. Springsteen takes the stage carrying roses for a three-hour-plus meditation on love and romance. Though some of the stage props from this first show will be phased out down the road, the strong concept of the show will remain.

Joseph P. Kahn reviews the show in the *Washington Post*: "As members of the E Street Band walked onstage and pretended to purchase tickets at the Tunnel of Love booth—a visual introduction to the evening's carnival theme, as well as a sly commentary on the difficulty of finding tickets to the show—the anticipation built even more. 'Ready for a date?' Bruce asked, strolling to the mic and tossing a bouquet of red roses into the crowd. If crowd noise was any indication, they were more than ready.... Springsteen punctuated the show with some moving monologues and surprisingly theatrical pieces. Introducing "All That Heaven Will Allow," he sat on a park bench with longtime sidekick Clarence Clemons and reminisced...." The opener includes eight songs from the new album; toward the end of the night Bruce tells the crowd, "I forgot how much work this is!... It's fun, too."

March - May

The Express Tour continues with East Coast shows throughout March. Bruce wins the Grammy on March 2 for Best Rock Solo Vocal Performance. On March 19, "One Step Up," the album's final U.S. single (though others will be released overseas) enters the Top 40, peaking at #13. Joe Grushecky joins the band on March 20 in Pittsburgh. On March 30, Detroit's WRIF ruffles label feathers by playing a complete



The Tunnel of Love horns:
Madison Square Garden
May 23, 1988

Philadelphia, PA
March 9, 1988



bootleg tape of the Worcester show on the air—according to the program director, “for people who couldn’t get tickets” to the Detroit shows.

By April, *Tunnel* has sold 5 million copies as the tour continues with shows at Nassau Coliseum in New York at the beginning of the month. April 4 and 5 brings the tour to Landover, MD, where Fawn Hall reportedly sends a note backstage saying she’d like to meet Springsteen. His supposed written response soon circulates: “I don’t like you. I don’t like your boss. I don’t like what you did. Thank you.” Richard Harrington writes in the *Washington Post* that the concert “...was not a simple joy ride but a brilliantly thought-out journey through the landscape of modern relationships, with enough twists and turns to make you dizzy and just enough slow glides to let you catch your breath.... In his introduction to ‘Born to Run,’ Springsteen had said ‘the past is something that seems to bind us together, but it’s also something that can drag you down, hold you back,’ noting that he’d spend his life trying to answer the questions that he’s raised in the song. On a larger level, it’s obvious he’s chosen not to be entombed by his own myths. This concert seems to be a way of slamming the brakes on the accelerating hype of the past few years and returning the focus to the music without dismissing or discouraging that unique connection he’s established with his audiences. That his music remains as powerful and

affecting as it does is one last reconciliation between a visceral medium and some much-needed new messages.”

The tour heads west through Texas, landing in L.A. at the end of the month. On April 23, Roy Orbison celebrates his birthday at the concert, where Bruce talks about his influence and leads the crowd in singing “Happy Birthday.” The April 27 and 28 Sports Arena shows are filmed for the “Tougher Than the Rest” video, and audio recorded for live B-sides released later. May 3 at Shoreline Amphitheater is the longest show of the U.S. tour, and one of the best; Bruce dances with his mother on “Dancing in the Dark.”

Back on the East Coast, Bruce and the E Streeters sell out May 16-23, their first shows at Madison Square Garden since 1980 and the last U.S. shows of the tour. According to *People* magazine, Bruce is approached by Dr. Ruth Westheimer backstage, who tells him, “I like what you say about love and sex, but there’s one more thing you need to include in your songs—contraception.” Bruce replies, “Gee, it’s going to be tough to get the word contraception into a song.”

June - August

The European tour, beginning June 11 in Turin, Italy, brings the band back into stadiums. With an average capacity of 40,000, not all shows are sell-outs, and the more intimate songs will tend to be dropped for the stadium-tested *Born in the U.S.A.*

material. Bruce is in Rome by June 13, when he plays two songs with street musicians in the Piazza di Spagna for all of 15 people. The Rome concerts themselves are on June 15 and 16. It is here that a photographer catches Bruce and Patti together—a nice paparazzi photo of me in my jockey shorts on a balcony in Rome,” as Bruce remembers later. The scandalous photos soon run this month in tabloids both in the U.S. and abroad. Years later, Bruce will tell *The Advocate*, “It’s a strange society that assumes it has the right to tell people whom they love and whom they shouldn’t. But the truth is, I basically ignored the entire thing as much as I could. I said, ‘Well, all I know is, this feels real, and maybe I have got a mess going here in some fashion, but that’s life.’” Stops in France, England and the Netherlands fill out the rest of June.

The first set of the July 3 Stockholm show is broadcast live to more than 15 countries. Springsteen’s first live broadcast since the 1978 *Darkness* tour is hosted by Kid Leo and WNEW’s Scott Muni, with Springsteen stipulating there be no sponsor. Springsteen announces to the world at the end of the first set that he is joining Amnesty International’s Human Rights Now! tour later in the year. Patients at a hospital adjacent to the stadium are issued earplugs.

After stops in Ireland, England, West Germany, and Switzerland, Springsteen and the E Streeters play to their largest crowd ever on July 19: over 160,000 people attend the

show in Communist East Berlin. The concert is part of a five-day Berlin festival called “Nicaragua in our Hearts” to promote solidarity with the Sandinistas, and Springsteen is only the second major American rock artist to ever play the city. Count on the Commies to get what Reagan and George Will didn’t: the GDR press release reads, “Bruce Springsteen, born in 1949 into a working class family, in many of his songs attacked social misery and injustice in his native country.” The show is broadcast in part on TV and radio in East Germany, both of which censor the following statement: “I would just like to say that I am not here today in support of or in opposition to any government. I’m here to play some rock ‘n’ roll music for East Berliners, in the hopes that someday all the barriers between us will be torn down.” Over the next two weeks, the tour wraps up with stops in Denmark, Norway, West Germany and Madrid, Spain, with the final show on August 3, for 80,000 fans in Barcelona.

Back in the U.S., as the fall draws closer in this election year, Presidential candidates from both parties appear at rallies to the strains of “Born in the U.S.A.” The not-so-rally-ready *Folkways—A Vision Shared: A Tribute to Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly* is released on August 23. Jay Cocks writes in *Time*: “Anyone who wonders where the populism and sparseness of Springsteen’s work in the ‘80s sprang from—and who has missed his memorable Guthrie performances in concert—can catch up here by playing ‘Vigilante Man’ and ‘I Ain’t Got No Home.’” The two songs were recorded with the E Street Band earlier in the year—as it turns out, the last time they will record together until 1995. The *Chimes of Freedom* EP is



also out in late August, with royalties to benefit Amnesty International. On August 30, Julianne Springsteen files for divorce.



September - December

The Human Rights Now! Tour begins on September 2 in London. Springsteen and the E Street Band join Peter Gabriel (whose band includes David Sancious), Sting, Tracy Chapman, Youssou N'Dour and indigenous artists to play for 15 countries on five continents. The band will perform to over one million people, including eight cities Bruce and the E Streeters have played before, with their first shows ever in South America, India and Africa. Springsteen's status overshadows even this group of performers and this cause—the E Street Band is the concert-closer and clearly the main draw. At press conferences on practically a daily basis, Springsteen's vocal political stance is a far cry from the MUSE concerts a decade earlier, the last time he had joined other artists for a cause. Most shows run around seven hours, but Springsteen's sets are some of his shortest since 1975.

On September 4 in Paris, Sting begins singing with Bruce on "The River." As the tour is covering more than 35,000 miles in just six weeks, September 6 includes breakfast in Paris, lunch in Budapest, and dinner in Turin, Italy. In Costa Rica on September 13, Bruce plays during a heavy rainstorm for his first show in Central America. On September 17 in Montreal, Bruce begins returning the favor to Sting by dueting on "Every Breath You Take."

The tour hits the U.S. on September 19, when Bruce tells the press conference, "In this country there are a lot of human rights abuses. When the streets are filled with homeless, when people are not granted their economic and social rights, that's a human rights violation." Sancious joins the E Street Band for "Glorious Days" at this show in Philadelphia; the tour also hits L.A. on September 21 and Oakland on September 23.

Both Joan Baez and Gabriel lead the 60,000 fans in attendance in singing "Happy Birthday" to Bruce, his 39th, at the longest (and perhaps best) show of the Amnesty tour.

Of the Harare, Zimbabwe, show on October 7, Bruce tells reporters: "Looking out and seeing black hands raised with white hands was a very emotional moment. When black hands and white hands are raised together, rich hands and poor hands, and hands in the East and hands in the West, that is when governments tremble and that's the day when they will pay more attention to the articles of the [U.N. Human Rights] Document."

Back in the U.S. on October 10, apparently less concerned with such matters, *People* runs a cover story on "Bruce's New Love," referring to Scialfa as "Springsteen's mystery woman." The Amnesty world tour finishes up with a concert in Buenos Aires, partially broadcast on 1000 stations around the world, with an estimated 100 million listeners. "The end of this tour marks my graduation of sorts," Springsteen says, "and I hope that I will be able to go back home and in my music write about a different sensibility that I felt on this tour."

In November, Bruce guests with John Prine on the East Coast and Southside Johnny on the West Coast, but otherwise lays low, with reports that he is working with Patti on her solo album.

After the high-profile Amnesty tour, Bruce's image is once again ripe for deflating, and the December issue of *Esquire* bashes Bruce with a piece by John Lombardi titled, "Saint Boss: Has Fame Crucified Bruce Springsteen?" Probably more disheartening, Castiles manager and old friend Tex Vinyard dies on December 5, within days of Roy Orbison. December 10 is the 40th anniversary of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, celebrated with a telecast of the Buenos Aires show on HBO. On December 18, "Santa Claus" at the Stone Pony is Bruce's last performance of the year.



1989

January - May

The year after the Amnesty tour, Bruce decides to take some time off. As he later writes in *Songs*: "After *Tunnel of Love* was released in 1987 and I toured in 1988, I spent the next two years doing very little musically. These were the years in which I saw my family come together.... We lived in New York for a while, then we moved to California.... By 1989 Patti and I were looking for a change of scenery and a fresh start. After a stint in New York City, I realized I still craved some open space."

Bruce does make his regular appearance at the annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction dinner on January 18. Springsteen joins the all-star band, and performs "Crying" in memory of Roy Orbison, with Vini Lopez on drums. Robert Hilburn gives the odds of artists being inducted when their time comes—on a scale of 1-99, he gives Springsteen a 99-1/2. The *Video Anthology* collection is released on January 31.

On March 1, Springsteen's divorce is final. He is seen about town in L.A. in the spring, and is rumored to be dealing with writers block as he helps Patti with work on her solo

album. As for the rest of the E Street Band members, on April 27, Max Weinberg tells the audience on his "Growin' Up on E Street" lecture tour, "Most of us have families now, and everyone is just kind of doing their own thing right now." Vinyl begins to be phased out, and deleted albums that aren't on CD yet—like *No Nukes*—go out of print.

June - September

Numerous summer club appearances from Bruce raise hope that a new record is on the horizon. Bruce's first gig of the summer is with Killer Joe on June 2, including Max and Roy. From late June to September, Bruce plays 15 club gigs on the Jersey shore. Nils and Clarence are touring this summer with Ringo Starr's All-Starr Band; when the tour comes to New Jersey on August 11, the entire E Street Band minus Danny is there, with Bruce onstage for four songs. On September 13 and 14, he records with different musicians for the first time on "Viva Las Vegas." But Bruce is soon jamming with E Streeters again, as he celebrates his birthday with two Shore appearances on September 22 and 23. On the second night, he plays with Steve, Garry, Roy, Patti and Max. Bruce slow dances with his mother, and exclaims, "I'm forty years old, but damn, I'm still handsome!" He soon leaves for a motorcycle trip through the Southwest, playing a biker bar in Prescott, AZ, on September 29.

This fall, CBS announces a corpo-

The Stone Pony
June 2, 1989



rate decision to stop releasing vinyl singles—"One Step Up" was Springsteen's first cassette single and now, it would seem, his last 45 in the U.S.

October - December

After the Ringo tour, Clarence releases his third album and gets back to acting with *Jake and the Fat Man*. Nils is recording for a new solo record, and Max is back on the lecture circuit. CBS reports that Patti continues work on her solo album, with no release date yet. Roy purchased an L.A. studio this year, Crystal Sound, and plans to work there this winter. Garry is working as a producer in Nashville. Danny is building a recording studio on his farm in Jersey and writing songs.

The phone call, according to Weinberg, comes on **October 18**. Springsteen telephones the E Street Band members and tells them, in the words of publicist Marilyn Laverty, that they should "feel free to accept other offers." The week of **November 13**, magazines such as *People* and *Newsweek* run stories. *People* reports: "Bruce Springsteen has told the faithful members of his E Street Band, most of whom he has been playing with for 15 years, that he no longer wants to be their Boss." The story quickly becomes one of firing. Max tells the *Asbury Park Press*, "Absolutely not. The concept of being fired doesn't even apply after almost two decades of working with Bruce." Clarence is reportedly shocked by the call, but Garry tells WNEW that Bruce's phone call was "basically stating the obvious"—after all, of his '80s recordings, only the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions were full-band. Talent tells the *Press*, "He's working on new ideas. He'd be a fool to limit himself by sticking with the same players he's been recording with for almost 20 years." Still, as *Hard Copy* reports: "The Boss fires the E Street Band."

A couple years later, Weinberg tells *Backstreets*, "Initially, it was very difficult to accept. In fact, I didn't accept it at first; I denied it. I think that was because it was never truly articulated to me that the relationship the E Street Band had with Bruce was definitely over. I had to figure that out for myself."

In 1992, Bruce would give his first public explanation, telling Kurt Loder, "I felt like I'd gone a long time playing with the same people, and I hadn't had a chance to go out and see what other people could bring to what I was doing. I think you've got some responsibility to try and step out a bit. It was very, very frightening."

On **December 1** in L.A.—with Roy Bittan, Randy Jackson on bass and Jeff Porcaro on drums—Springsteen records "Trouble in Paradise."

1990

January - June

Springsteen's last performance of the '80s was with Clarence Clemons, but as the new decade dawns, Bruce's plans to go his own way haven't changed. The **January 11** issue of *Rolling Stone* reports that Bruce "has served notice" to the E Street Band: "Springsteen has expressed a desire to expand the scope of his music. That, combined with his rapid rise to superstardom and very public divorce from Julianne Phillips, may have caused a kind of midlife career crisis. He has no firm plans to begin recording, and his next album may be a long time coming."

But within a week of his **January 17** jam at the Hall of Fame induction dinner, he records "Part Man, Part Monkey" in Los Angeles. In **February**, as *The Last Temptation of Elvis* gives fans the first taste of the post-E Street Bruce on "Viva Las Vegas," work on the next album really begins. Bruce later tells *Rolling Stone*, "I remembered that Roy had some tracks that he'd play to me on occasion. So I called him and said, 'Come on over, maybe I'll try to write to some of your tracks.'" "Roll of the Dice" is their first collaboration, and Springsteen's first with a band member. Bobby King is soon brought in to add vocals. "And then Roy and I started working together pretty steadily.... *Human Touch* was definitely something I struggled to put together. It was like a job. I'd work at it every day." "Leavin' Train" is recorded on **February 27**.

In **April**, Bruce buys a Beverly Hills home, according to the *L.A. Times*, for \$14 million. In **May** and **June**, major media report that Bruce is working on a new album, many saying it's due out by the end of the year. That's at least half-right, as recording continues; "Seven Angels" is cut on **June 29**.

July - December

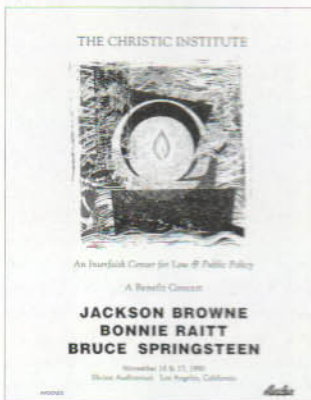
Springsteen has given 2 Live Crew's Luther "Luke Skywalker" Campbell



permission to appropriate "Born in the U.S.A." for his single "Banned in the U.S.A.," released in **early July**. Campbell and the Crew had been arrested for obscenity, and their records have brought censorship issues to the fore. Landau tells *Rolling Stone*, "Bruce is not unmindful of the fact that Luke is on the spot. He's happy to lend a hand." Florida lawyer Jack Thompson tells the *L.A. Times*, "Bruce and Luther can go to hell together."

With news that Bruce and Patti are expecting, the *Detroit Free Press* has a contest to name the baby. Joanne Scharich, a *Backstreets* subscriber, wins with "Wendy Janey Sandy Candy Mary Sherry Rosalita Springsteen." If it had been a girl, who knows; instead, Evan James Springsteen is born on **July 25**.

With some songs and a basic sound he likes, Springsteen begins asking additional musicians to contribute. His recording process continues in the direction begun on *Tunnel*, putting songs together piece-by-piece with numerous players rather than performing them live with a band.



In **November**, joining Bonnie Raitt and Jackson Browne at L.A. benefit shows for the Christic Institute, Springsteen has a chance to try out some of his new material on an audience. He does that—and much more—with two stunning solo shows on acoustic guitar and piano, breath-taking explorations of his past and present work. For his first full concerts without the E Street Band, and his first in two years, he tells the crowd, "If you're moved to clap along, don't. It'll mess me up." The audience complies, and is treated to the premieres of "Red Headed Woman," "57 Channels," "When the Lights Go Out" and "Real World" on **November 16**; "The Wish" (later revealed to be a *Tunnel* outtake) and "Soul Driver" on **November 17**. There will be no record this year, but after the Christic shows *Billboard* predicts a "mid-1991 release," and Springsteen hits the studio in December with a vengeance.

1991

January - June

Springsteen's Hall of Fame induction jam is the first of only six performances this year. After the **January 6** ceremony, Bruce continues working on his record. In the spring, he reads a contribution to an upcoming Disney compilation of songs for children. He records a song called "Pony Boy," but replaces it at the last minute with a cover of a song he discovers in his son's nursery, John Casidy's "Chicken Lips and Lizard Hips." By **May**, new songs from the Christic shows have been registered for copyright with the Library of Congress, and according to the *Washington Post*, Annie Leibovitz has done three photo sessions with Bruce in the last three months.

As time passes with no Bruce album, the *Village Voice* does a humorous speculation piece on the best albums of the '90s, with Bruce Springsteen's *Manitoba* at #3: "a tortured masterpiece... recorded on a Walkman tape recorded in a broom closet in a small thatched hut on the remote shores of Lake Winnipeg."

Patti Scialfa's record is on the official Columbia schedule for June, but is pushed back. Patti has other plans for this month anyway: she and Bruce are married on the lawn of their home in Beverly Hills on **June 8**. According to *Rolling Stone*, Steve, Danny and Roy provide entertainment, and, a lesson having been learned, a helicopter is reportedly hired to keep press away.

July - December

Springsteen goes to New York to contribute to Southside Johnny's new album, recording his parts for "All the Way Home" on **July 2**. The *Better Days* album—which has brought together numerous old friends including Max, Garry, various Jukes, and Little Steven back at the helm—wraps by the end of the month.

By this point, *Human Touch* is essentially complete. Still on the East Coast on **July 12**, Bruce jams with



Bobby Bandiera and makes his first mention of a new album, telling the crowd it will be out in December with a tour next year. Of *Human Touch*, Springsteen later tells *Rolling Stone*, "...at the end, I felt like it was good, but it was about me trying to get to a place. It sort of chronicled the post-*Tunnel of Love* period. So when we finished it, I just sat on it for a couple of months."

As it turns out, it's a good thing he hasn't yet turned the record in. After listening to Dylan's "Series of Dreams" while riding around L.A., Bruce is inspired to write one more song. Back in his home studio, he records "Living Proof," which opens the songwriting floodgates. In early August, *Billboard* and *USA Today* both say not to look for an album until 1992.

On September 26, four of New Jersey's favorite sons converge on the Stone Pony to shoot a video for Southside's "It's Been a Long Time." In this case, it's been forever: Springsteen, Southside, Little Steven and Jon Bon Jovi perform onstage together for the first time. The concert's two full sets are filmed for later release. Less than a week later, on October 1, the Pony is ordered closed by bankruptcy court. Southside's *Better Days* is released in late October.

While *Human Touch* has taken nearly a year to record, Springsteen has come up with another album of material in just eight weeks this fall. And as opposed to the complicated sessions for *Human Touch*, the album that will become *Lucky Town* is essentially a solo record, with Gary Malabar replacing Springsteen's drum machine.

For thematic reasons—and after some inspiration from Guns N' Roses' *Use Your Illusion I & II*—Springsteen decides to release them as two separate albums, simultaneously. He later tells *Rolling Stone*, "I wanted to put out a lot of music, because I didn't want to be dependent on my old songs when I went out to tour. I wanted to have a good body of work to draw from when I hit the stage. And then I realized that the two albums together kind of tell one story. There's *Tunnel of Love*, then there's what happened in between, which is *Human Touch*, then there's *Lucky Town*. And I basically said: 'Well, hey—Guns N' Roses! They put out two albums, maybe I'll try it!'"

By late November, the albums are in the post-production and final mixing stages, and are now slated for early 1992. But there's still time for a significant Springsteen product in 1991: daughter Jessica Rae is born on December 30.

1992

January - April

On January 11, Nirvana's *Nevermind* hits #1 on the album charts—a surprise that changes the face of rock radio just before Springsteen's first albums in over four years. On January 23, a press release makes the simultaneous release official, announcing the upcoming *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* with a quote from Bruce: "I'm excited about being finished and am looking forward to getting out on the road." On January 30, Jon Landau holds a listening party for Sony executives in New Orleans, where Bruce tells the crowd, "I've got two new babies at home. These two babies I'm giving to you. Take good care of them." While in town, Bruce shoots the "Human Touch" video on the St. Charles streetcar line and jams with the Iguanas on February 2.

"Human Touch"/"Better Days" comes out on March 4, Bruce's first single since 1978 with an LP track on the B-side. On March 21, it enters the Top 40 and will reach #16.

Human Touch and *Lucky Town* are released on March 31, with 1.5 million copies shipping of each. David Hinckley writes in the *New York Daily News*, "The mere presence of these records is uplifting. He's given us a lot of good music at a time when we can use it." 24 songs, with four producers, five recording studios, 17 backing musicians. It's not surprising that the result is less than seamless. *Entertainment Weekly* calls the albums "His most confused records since his debut. It's as though his ability to craft a good record has gone the way of his working-class image." Anthony DeCurtis argues in *Rolling Stone*, "The aesthetic and thematic aims of

Human Touch and *Lucky Town* would have been better realized by a single, more carefully shaped collection that eliminated their half dozen or so least essential songs."

But the critical response on the whole is positive. Joel Selvin writes in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "while breaking no new musical ground on these companion pieces, he has created his most mature and subtle work to date." The contributions from Sam Moore, Bobby King, and Mark Isham might belie the "no new musical ground" part, and *Tunnel* is hard to beat for subtlety, but Selvin narrows down the importance of these records: Springsteen's maturity. As a man and as an artist, writing of life one step beyond the doubts of *Tunnel*—years after Bob Seger called him "our fearless leader," and years after Springsteen himself noted that there wasn't a model for adult music in rock as there was in country—Springsteen forges ahead.

Robert Hilburn writes in the *L.A. Times*: "For years, expressions of happiness were considered dangerous for rock's great artists because it might bring complacency. But you don't have to sacrifice your artistic instincts when acknowledging moments of comfort and tenderness. In these two albums, Springsteen offers living proof." He also offers a new set of totems. Matty Karas in the *Asbury Park Press* notes the repeating imagery of gypsies, birds, rivers and storms: "Awash in signs and portents of signs to come, what stands out from both albums after several listens is not songs and hooks, but a parade of birds flying over rivers in the rain."

While they top the U.K. charts, *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* peak in the U.S. at #2 and #3, respectively, the week of April 18. Def Leppard's *Adrenalize* holds the top spot.

As Springsteen rehearses a new band in L.A. in late April, a jury finds four L.A. police officers not guilty of beating a black motorist, Rodney King. A year of racial ten-

sions in the city—the act was videotaped and shown frequently on the news—comes to a head with the verdict. Rioting in South Central Los Angeles results in 38 dead, more than 1,250 injuries, and \$200 million of damage. Bruce tells James Henke, "It really felt like the wall was coming down.... we were down in Hollywood rehearsing, and people were scared. People were really scared. And then you were just, like, sad or angry." The riots will be referenced in live and remixed versions of "57 Channels," with the repeated chant, "No Justice, No Peace!"

May - August

Though the public is told that the Bottom Line has been rented out on May 6 for a bar mitzvah, on this date Springsteen returns to the New York club after 17 years. With his new band, Bruce premieres material off the two albums at this private party for industry-types, saying "We've only been together two weeks. That's my only disclaimer."

After that warm-up, Springsteen presents the new band to the general public on *Saturday Night Live* on May 9. With Zachary Alford, Tommy Sims, Shane Fontayne, and Roy Bittan, Springsteen plays three songs (the usual max is two) and essentially announces a tour to his nationwide audience: "See you this summer!"

SNL is Springsteen's first live television appearance. He later tells James Henke, "It felt very intense.... It was different, but I really enjoyed it. I mean, I must not have been on TV for all this time for some reason, but now that I've done it, it's like, 'Gee, why didn't I do this before?...' And I certainly think that I'm going to begin using television more in some fashion."

Over the next month, Springsteen adds to his burgeoning band: musician extraordinaire Crystal Taliefero as well as backup singers Gia Ciambotti, Carol Dennis, Bobby King, Cleo Kennedy, and Angel Rogers. On June 5, Springsteen's Dress Rehearsal broadcast tries out the expanded line-up and previews the tour. Contest winners from US radio and MTV Europe are flown to the show at a "mystery location"—Hollywood Center Studios, Stage #4.

Even before the tour begins, the two albums are falling down the charts. Bruce makes light of it at the Dress Rehearsal: "In the crystal ball, I see romance, I see adventure, I see financial reward. I see those albums, man, I see them going back up the charts. I see them rising past that old Def Leppard, past that Kriss Kross. I see them all the way past Weird Al Yankovic... Wait a minute, we're slipping. We're slipping down the charts! We're going down, down, out of sight, into the darkness...." The

The new band:
August, 1992



"57 Channels (and Nothin' On)" single in June does little to stop the descent.



The 1992-'93 World Tour opens on June 15 in Stockholm, playing 15 dates over the next month in Europe. As the Dress Rehearsal indicated, Bruce seems to be wrestling with how much numbers and sales and popularity matter, and with audience expectations versus artistic integrity. Before the tour began, Springsteen told James Henke in *Rolling Stone*, "People were coming to my shows expecting to hear 'Born to Run' or that stuff I wrote 15 years or 20 years ago. And I wanted to get to a spot where if people came to the show, there'd be a feeling of like, it's not going to be this, it's going to be something else." On June 21 in Milan, the fourth show of the tour, screaming fans are chanting for "Born to Run." Bruce gives in, and will play the song regularly from here on. Five nights in London through July 13 bring the first European leg to a close.

Starting a U.S. tour for in his home state for the first time, he begins an 11-night stand at the Meadowlands on July 23. Charles Cross writes in *Backstreets*, "Whether you liked the new songs or not, whether you found yourself a fan of the new band or missed the old crew, you could not help but find yourself in awe of Bruce. Though there are still questions regarding what this tour is really about, and just what he hopes to accomplish with it other than having a raving good time, Springsteen's own performance served to answer most of the questions posed by news reporters in stories like 'Whatever happened to Bruce?' His performance was transcendent, and when he was onstage, at least, all the questions about the new albums, about the firing the E Street Band, and about the future and the past, were put on the back burner. Spotlight on the Boss."

Though Bruce displays a sense of humor about it, the chart performance of the new albums do seem to

be a sore spot. *Lucky Town* is at "one hundred-and-fucking-five" on the charts, as he says in Jersey, and he asks the crowd for a copy of *Billboard* so he can rip it up. The week after the U.S. tour begins, albums move up the chart for the first time since their release: the week of August 10, *Human Touch* goes from #80 to #74. And back to #80 the next week.

Old songs continue to creep into the show: in Stockholm, more than half the songs were new. By the end of the Jersey stand on August 10, it's less than a third.

September - December

The tour has continued on the East Coast, and after a break, Bruce and his band return to the stage in California—Warner Studios, Stage #4, in Hollywood—for the September 22 taping of *MTV Unplugged*. While acoustic performances include "Red Headed Woman," "Growin' Up," and "Thunder Road," Springsteen basically performs a standard show with his current band. MTV executives are reportedly furious at his decision to abandon the acoustic format, but as one network VP says, "When you have an opportunity to do a Bruce Springsteen concert, electric, acoustic or banging on a garbage can, you do it." Springsteen is the first to insist on an electric performance, and when the show is aired, the "Un" in *Unplugged* is crossed out.

In early October, *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town* fall completely off the *Billboard* Top 200 chart. Each has gone platinum but are generally considered "failures." The *MTV Unplugged* performance premieres on November 11, and a home video is released on December 15. After the taping, Bruce and the band have been playing a solid schedule for the remainder of the U.S. tour this year. They work their way back to the East Coast for the last concert in Lexington, KY, on December 17. As they take an extended break for the holidays, the tour has played to 34 cities in eight countries, a total of 75 shows over six months on the road.



1993

January - March

In *Rolling Stone's* 1992 critics' poll, Springsteen is a no-show—the first time in his career a studio album failed to appear. He fares a little better in the readers' poll, coming in fifth under Artist of the Year, and second in the Comeback category.

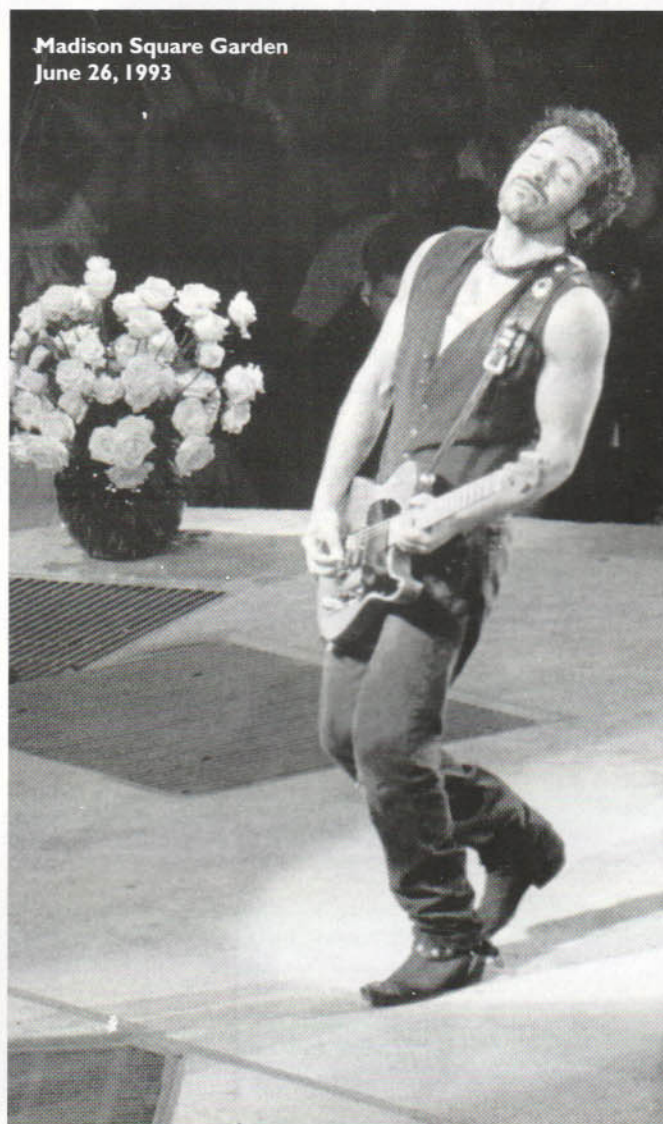
Kristen Ann Carr, a friend of Springsteen's and daughter of his associate manager, dies of sarcoma. Her funeral is held on January 6, where Bruce and Patti sing "If I Should Fall Behind." On January 13 in Los Angeles, Springsteen inducts Creedence Clearwater Revival into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and jams on three Creedence songs.

In early March, it is announced that Patti's album is finally ready and

will be released this summer. In the middle of the month, preparing to head back to Europe, Bruce and the band rehearse for a week at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, NJ. On March 21 Bruce decides he wants to open it up for a performance, and "The Rehearsal" warm-up concert on March 23 is the most exciting and dramatic of the tour so far. So many of the sets throughout the fall had been carbon copies, but this night brings a mind-blowing setlist, running the gamut from Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart" to the world premiere of a legendary decade-old outtake. The 1993 European leg begins on March 31 in Glasgow, the concerts now feature a three-song acoustic set at the beginning of the show, highlighting the newly uncovered "This Hard Land."

April - June

Over the next two months, the European tour plays to 27 concerts in 22 cities. But Bruce must still be getting his papers back home in Los Angeles:



Madison Square Garden
June 26, 1993

on April 3, the *L.A. Times* runs a story called "Children of the Border" by Sebastian Rotello, about transborder children on the streets of San Diego, referencing Balboa Park. This story will later be credited on *The Ghost of Tom Joad*. On April 24, Sony releases the *In Concert: MTV Plugged* album in Europe only, as a tour memento for European fans. The album is available for only 90 days before going out of print, and is not considered part of the official catalog.

The second European leg ends on June 1 in Oslo, Norway, but the 1992-'93 band's tenure isn't quite over. To wrap the year-long tour, Springsteen celebrates their homecoming with two benefit shows at the end of the month. On June 24, the Concert to Fight Hunger at the Meadowlands is one of Bruce's longest, at 35 songs. The day between the benefits, Springsteen joins Paul Shaffer and the World's Most Dangerous Band for "Glory Days," on the last installment of NBC's *Late Night with David Letterman*.

June 26 at Madison Square Garden is the last date of the 1992-'93 tour. The Concert for the Kristen Ann Carr Fund is held "to celebrate her memory," and also to raise funds to help fight sarcoma. A bouquet of white roses sits on stage for the entire show. (Contributions to the Kristen Ann Carr Fund can still be made by writing in care of the T.J. Martell Foundation, 6 West 57th St., NY, NY 10019.)

Springsteen and his band go out on a high note with these two benefit shows, not hurt by some special guests: Max Weinberg, Southside Johnny, Little Steven, the Miami Horns, Clarence Clemons, Joe Ely and Terence Trent D'Arby. Spring-

steen jams with Clarence a few nights later at the Tradewinds on June 29.

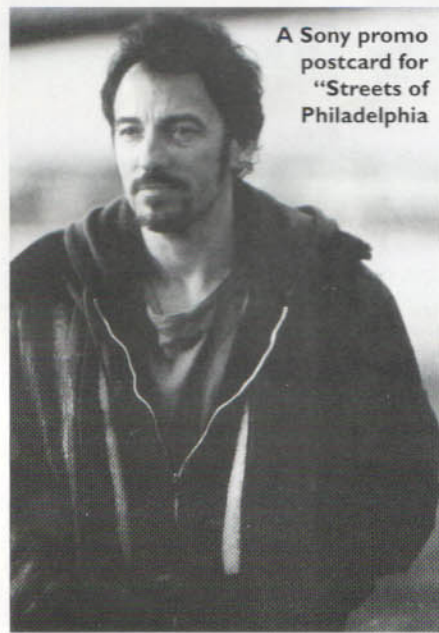
July - December

Rumble Doll, Patti Scialfa's wonderful first solo album, is released at last on July 27. On September 13, NBC's *Late Night* returns with new host Conan O'Brien—and with new bandleader Max Weinberg. Springsteen takes the rest of the year off from performing, but he does have a project to keep him busy. Earlier this year, Bruce had been approached by director Jonathan Demme to write a song for *Philadelphia*, to be the first major motion picture to confront the AIDS crisis. Bruce doesn't commit at first, but as Chuck Plotkin tells *Billboard*, "Jonathan told him not simply about the story, but about the atmosphere and the main character in such sufficient depth that it began to work on Bruce."

Bruce works up a demo with synth and drum machine in his home studio. As he writes in *Songs*: "I had my studio set up in Rumson and for a few afternoons I went in with some lyrics I had partially written dealing with the death of a close friend. Jonathan requested a rock song to open the film. I spent a day or so trying to accommodate, but the lyrics I had seemed to resist being put to rock music. So I began to fiddle with the synthesizer, playing over a hip-hop-influenced beat I programmed on the drum machine. As soon as I slowed the rhythm down over some basic minor chords, the lyrics fell into place and the voice I was looking for came forward."

In October, "Streets of Philadelphia" is fleshed out with other musicians, but much like Nebraska, Bruce eventually goes back to the demo. Only Tommy Sims' background vocals survive. Springsteen has also

begun working on material in his home studio with Joe Grushecky. On December 6 and 7, the "Streets of Philadelphia" video is filmed by Demme, with Bruce actually walking those streets and performing a live vocal along the way. It is announced late in the year that he is contributing a song to the film, and Bruce tells reporters, "Jonathan asked me, and I was a fan of his pictures.... He gave me a general idea of emotionally what he might be looking for. I took a shot and he liked it." Demme isn't the only one—"Streets of Philadelphia" will be Springsteen's biggest hit in nearly ten years.



A Sony promo postcard for "Streets of Philadelphia"

1994

January - March

Bruce is back at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremony on January 19, for the most bizarre pairing of his induction performances: he and Axl Rose sing "Come Together," in honor of John Lennon. Springsteen gets an honor of his own on January 23, when he wins a Golden Globe award for "Streets of Philadelphia," his first song written specifically for a film. Accepting the award, he says, "I hope that this film, and in some smaller way this song, might take away a little chip out of the fear and intolerance and lack of compassion that we show for one another." Bruce performs the song at an AIDS Project benefit in L.A. on January 27.

In February, *All Men Are Brothers: A Tribute to Curtis Mayfield* contains Bruce's "Gypsy Woman," but "Streets of Philadelphia" is getting most of the attention. The song has been available only on the *Philadelphia* soundtrack, but a single is released this month. In *Entertainment Weekly* David Browne calls the song "the most arresting track the semi-retired Boss has done since *Tunnel of Love* nearly seven years ago." On February 10, Springsteen is nominated for an Academy Award.

The week of February 14, the song is the most-added song to rock radio in the US. With one song, Springsteen has accomplished what the last two records didn't: positive press and radio airplay. And maybe something more. Steve Pond later quotes a friend of Springsteen's: "The moral authority he lost when he was photographed on the balcony in Rome, he got back with 'Streets of Philadelphia.'"

On March 5, "Streets of Philadelphia" enters the top 40, where it will spend 15 weeks—the longest stay since "Dancing in the Dark" nearly ten years ago. There are rumors that an album is in the works, and Springsteen is recording material with players from the recent tour, but picking up these awards could become a full-time job. On March 21, Bruce wins an Oscar. Though he says he's "gotta share" the award with Neil Young, also nominated for his work on the *Philadelphia* soundtrack, Bruce is the first rock 'n' roll artist to win the Academy Award for Best Original Song. "This is the first song I ever wrote for a motion picture, so I guess it's all downhill from here," he jokes in his acceptance speech. "You do your best work, and you hope that it pulls out the best in your audience and some piece of it spills

over into the real world and into people's everyday lives and it takes the edge off the fear and allows us to recognize each other through our veil of differences. I always thought that was one of the things popular art was supposed to be about, along with the merchandising and all the other stuff."

April - June

On April 8, Nirvana's Kurt Cobain commits suicide. Springsteen later tells Neil Strauss, "[Nirvana] reset the rules of the game. They changed everything, they opened a vein of freedom that didn't exist previously. Kurt Cobain did something very similar to what Dylan did in the '60s, which was to sound different and get on the radio. He proved that a guitarist could sound different and still be heard. So Cobain reset a lot of very fundamental rules, and that type of artist is very few and far between."

With "Streets of Philadelphia" taking care of itself—on April 23, it becomes Springsteen's twelfth Top Ten single, and will reach #9—Bruce has been spending much of his time recording. "Secret Garden" is one song from these 1994 sessions. By May, a Columbia official confirms that Bruce now has enough material for a new album, which is being discussed for fall or winter release. Another good sign is that Bruce begins stepping out to play again, with a handful of club appearances into June. Bruce jams with Danny Federici, James Brown, the Rock Bottom Remainders, and on June 18, a fantastic "Wreck on the Highway" with John Wesley Harding.

July - December

Summer club shows include July 16 for the Stone Pony's 20th anniversary. The hot night gets hotter at this outdoor show as fans pack the Stone Pony Big Top to see Bruce, Patti, Max and Jon Bon Jovi join Southside as honorary Jukes. On August 20, after reports of Springsteen's studio collaboration with Joe Grushecky, the two rockers perform a full set together in Long Branch, NJ.

On September 8, Bruce performs "Streets of Philadelphia" at the MTV Music Awards, where he tells Kurt Loder, "Yeah, I got a new record, I got most of my songs right now.... I'd like to get it out in the first four months of next year, maybe, if it works out." If that wasn't equivocal enough, he stresses that he has a little more work to do; after the MTV show, he continues recording in L.A.

A few performances finish out the year, including with John Fogerty on September 21; Neil Young and Bob Dylan on October 21; Jackson Browne on November 13; and a Holiday Express gig at the Tradewinds Christmas party on December 20.

1995

January - February

There have been reports that the album release will coincide with Springsteen's upcoming appearance on the Grammy Awards—the reports will prove correct, but it's suddenly a very different kind of album. In early January, the news hits that Springsteen has begun work on a hits collection. As Springsteen later tells VH-1, "I'd been working on a record of my own for a while, in spurts... and I got to a place where I wasn't sure if I was gonna finish it. It didn't quite have the focus that I like my records to have. Jon called me one night and he read off a sequence, the sequence that's on [*Greatest Hits*], and it just seemed like a good idea." *Greatest Hits* will finally give "Streets of Philadelphia" a home on a Springsteen record, and Bruce also decides to bring the E Street Band back together in the studio to record new tracks for the album. He calls them on January 5, and by January 9, they are all in the studio together in New York.

Bruce later writes in *Songs*: "We walked into the Hit Factory, got behind our instruments, and had a

great time." The night before the sessions begin, Bruce writes the lyrics for "Blood Brothers": "I was trying to sort out what I was doing and what those relationships meant to me now and what those types of friendships mean as a person moves through life.... We hadn't worked together in eight years and really hadn't recorded together in ten. In the meantime, I did a lot of solo stuff, which I found satisfying. But I don't think I'd want to have to choose between the band and the solo stuff. I'd like to have both. One of the things I realized when I saw the guys was that we're like each other's arms and legs."

4 NEW SONGS WITH THE
E STREET BAND INCLUDING:

"MURDER
INCORPORATED"
"SECRET GARDEN"

January 11 is Clarence's birthday, and he is presented with a cake in the studio. He tells the *Boston Herald* that he had to cancel a big birthday party, but "standing in front of the microphone playing with the E Street Band was the best present I ever got in my life." The band re-records "This Hard Land" as well as a few songs new to them, including "Secret

Garden," which Bruce wrote for the 1994 album, and on January 12, "Back in Your Arms."

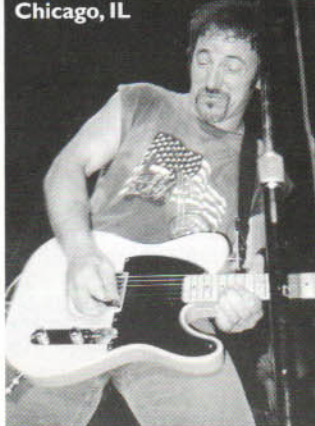
Filmmaker Ernie Fritz shoots 23 hours of documentary footage during the sessions. Springsteen tells Kurt Loder that this was "the most relaxed time we ever spent in the studio.... just because it didn't feel like a test anymore." When Loder asks about a tour, Springsteen says, "I've had this solo music.... this sort of dark record I've been trying to finish. If I can finish that, I'm sure I'd like to put that out."

On January 16, Shore Fire issues a press release announcing *Greatest Hits*, though the final song selection isn't completed until January 23. Bruce tells Neil Strauss "...the song selection for *Greatest Hits* was pretty much Jon's idea. We didn't try to get into a 'best of,' because everybody's got their own ideas. Basically it was songs that came out as singles. The only exception is 'Thunder Road,' but it seemed central... I wanted to introduce my music to younger fans, who for 12 bucks could get a pretty good overview of what I've done over the years. And for my older fans I wanted to say, 'This still means something to me now, you still mean something to me now.' It was just kind of a way of reaffirming the relationship that I've built up with my audience over the past 25 years, which outside of my family is the most important relationship in my life." Bruce is in Portland, ME, on January 24 to work on mastering with Bob Ludwig.

By February 9, the album is complete and Springsteen is giving out copies to friends. "Murder Incorporated" is sent to radio stations via satellite transmission on February 15, with promo CDs sent out the next day. Bruce and the E Street Band take the stage at Tramps on February 21, as Jonathan Demme films a live video for the song in front of a small crowd of around 300. Garry Tallent tells journalist Tom Roland, "We set up live in a club, and we hadn't played together in seven years, and went, 'okay, let's try some of the old songs.' It was amazing, everybody remembered their parts real well, and it sounded good, but it gave us a new perspective on what the band was all about. The kind of power that emanates when that group of people plays together is really very awe-inspiring. Even I'd forgotten in seven years."

Greatest Hits is released on February 28. Parke Puterbaugh ends his *Rolling Stone* review comparing "This Hard Land" to Woody Guthrie's work: "This may, in fact, be where Springsteen is headed. It wouldn't be surprising if, on his next travels, he walked alone with a guitar and harmonica." Springsteen's new album is now projected for September.

The 1995 October Assault Chicago, IL



March - May

On March 1, the day after *Greatest Hits* is in stores, Bruce performs "Streets of Philadelphia" at the Grammy Awards. He takes home four Grammys: Song of the Year, Best Song Written for a Motion Picture or Television, Best Rock Song, and Best Male Rock Vocal.

Another story in the *L.A. Times* on March 13 provides Bruce with inspiration for his work-in-progress: "California's Illicit Farm Belt Export," by Mark Arax and Tom Gordon, examines the effects of methamphetamine production and trade, and describes the "Sinaloa Cowboys" involved.

On March 18, *Greatest Hits* debuts at #1—his second album to do so, and his fifth #1 album in all. Springsteen and the E Streeters perform twice on April 5, first at the taping for Letterman's *Late Show*, then at an industry concert, playing 18 songs at Sony Studios in New York. By May, E Street activities are over for the time being, and Bruce settles in to record at home in L.A.

Inspired by John Steinbeck's (and John Ford's) *The Grapes of Wrath*, Bruce had written a song called "The Ghost of Tom Joad" for the January E Street sessions. As he later writes in *Songs*, "...it didn't feel right, so I set it aside. I returned to it some months later, while still unsure of what I wanted to work on next.... I began recording with just myself and my acoustic guitar. When I felt I had some workable material, I put together a small, five-piece group. Once I cut 'Tom Joad,' I had a feeling for the record I wanted to make." "Brothers Under the Bridge" is recorded on May 22.



Berlin, Germany
July 9, 1995



FLORIAN SPITTLER PHOTO

SASCHA LEESE PHOTO

June - October

Bruce has been out of sight since April, but in early July he takes one of the more bizarre sidetrips of his career: On July 9, he takes the stage with German rocker Wolfgang Niedecken at Cafe Eckstein in Berlin to record a video for "Hungry Heart." Less incongruous is the work he's been doing with his pal Joe Grushecky, not only co-writing songs with him but producing the Houserockers' new album, *American Babylon*. Bruce, Max and Steve join the Houserockers at Tradewinds on July 22 for a long set that includes songs from the album.

During the summer, Springsteen talks to Neil Strauss for *Guitar World* about his recording plans: "[The E Street Band and I] are probably going to do some more recording. I have some things that I'm going to record in the next couple of weeks, on my own, and see if I can finish up this solo record I've been working on. If it's good, I'll release it. If not, I'll throw it out. Then I'll see what the guys are doing and maybe cut some things with them and see where that goes." One break in recording comes after Grateful Dead leader Jerry Garcia dies on August 9; on August 10, Bruce jams with Solar Circus to pay tribute with several Dead standards.

A book called *Journey to Nowhere* provides the catalyst for the completion of Springsteen's next record. Bruce later writes in the introduction for a new edition of the book: "I had completed most of the *Tom Joad* record when one night, unable to sleep, I pulled this book down off my living room shelf. I read it in one sitting and I lay awake frightened by its implications. In the next week I wrote 'Youngstown' and 'The New Timer.'" *The Ghost of Tom Joad* is finished up by late summer, and the decision is soon made to push for a Christmas release.

For the next couple of months, Bruce devotes himself to rock 'n' roll. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland opens to the public on September 2, and Bruce is of course on hand for the festivities. The E Street Band joins him to open a marathon, multi-artist stadium show, and they play a couple of Bruce originals as well as songs with Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. From October 10-18, Bruce joins Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers for a six-stop tour—the "October Assault"—in support of *American Babylon*. Lloyd Sachs reviews the final show in the *Chicago Sun-Times*:

"This was a seamless, powerhouse performance of raging guitars, bruising working-class laments and all-out party music." Considering what Springsteen has planned for the months ahead, these shows serve as a chance to get that party music out of his system for a while.

On October 28, a solo return to the Bridge School Benefit previews Bruce's new direction, as he takes the stage with a harp around his neck and an acoustic guitar in hand. Two new songs premiere: "Sinaloa Cowboys" early in the set, and his closing "The Ghost of Tom Joad," dedicated to "the Gingrich mob."

November - December

November 21 brings Springsteen's 13th album to stores. *The Ghost of Tom Joad* is released on the same day as *The Beatles Anthology*—clearly

some fierce competition for sales, but one listen to the stark *Tom Joad* suggests that, this time around, Bruce no longer cares. Steve Pond writes: "If *Nebraska* was his answer to Reagan's America, *The Ghost of Tom Joad* is his answer to Governor Pete Wilson's California: a land with no room for immigrants and hard-hearted residents anxious to find a foreign scapegoat for their woes." Mikal Gilmore reviews the album for *Rolling Stone*: "...By climbing into their hearts and minds, Springsteen has given voice to people who rarely have one in this culture. And giving voice to people who are typically denied expression in our other arts and media has always been one of rock 'n' roll's most important virtues. As we move into the rough times and badlands that lie ahead, such acts will count for more than ever before."

The day of the record release, Springsteen starts his first ever solo acoustic tour in New Brunswick, NJ. After two Jersey warm-up shows, Springsteen takes the intimate show to theaters in seven major cities across the U.S. over the next month, beginning in L.A. on November 26. Only 2,000 - 4,000 people can see each performance, but along the way he also reaches the masses, playing "The Ghost of Tom Joad" for *The Tonight Show* on November 27, and for *The Late Show* on December 14. The December 17 concert, the last one of the year for a rowdy crowd at New York's Beacon Theater, includes the second-ever performance of "The Wish"—"this being my last show before Christmas."

1996

January - May

Springsteen has also followed up his "Streets of Philadelphia" success with a pair of songs written for other movies. *Dead Man Walking* (with Bruce's title track, which premiered live on the first show of this Joad tour) and *The Crossing Guard* (featuring his new "Missing") are both on screens in January. But the tour is now where his heart seems to be. Clearly enjoying the freedom of this kind of minimal touring, which he hasn't done since the early '70s, Springsteen takes his show back on the road for more North American dates throughout the month. This stretch begins on January 7 in Montreal, with shows through January 28 in Atlanta. On February 5, the "Dead Man Walkin'" video premieres on MTV.

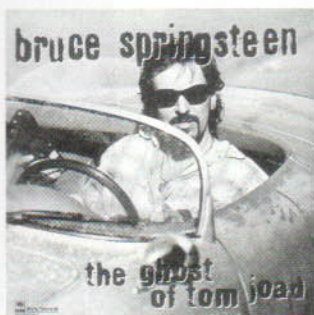
The first European leg of the *Tom Joad* tour kicks off in Frankfurt, Germany on February 12. *Blood Brothers*, Ernie Fritz's documentary from the *Greatest Hits* sessions, has its U.S. premiere on March 3 on the Disney



Channel, an 80-minute look inside the studio with Springsteen and the E Street Band with a few new songs to boot. In the middle of his tour of Europe, Springsteen returns briefly to the States to perform the Oscar-nominated "Dead Man Walking" at the Academy Awards ceremony on March 25. Springsteen has been working unreleased songs into his shows; on April 16 the ribald "Pilgrim in the Temple of Love"—also known as "Santa Gets a Blowjob"—debuts at Royal Albert Hall in London. The first Europe leg continues through May 8 in Madrid.



Asbury Park, NJ
November 24, 1996

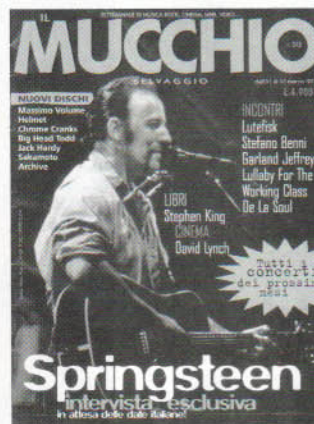


1997 1998

June - December

Springsteen takes most of the summer off, spending time with his family which now includes another son, Sam Ryan. But Bruce does take the stage on **August 8 and 9**. In Whitefish, MT, for longtime engineer Toby Scott's wedding, Bruce plays twice with local band the Fanatics. The second North American leg of the tour kicks off in Pittsburgh, PA, on **September 16**. A few special shows highlight this fall's more than 40 shows. On **September 29**, Bruce stops in Cleveland for a tribute to Woody Guthrie put together by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The **October 26** *Tom Joad* show is a benefit for the John Steinbeck Research Center in San Jose, CA, where Bruce actually reads from *The Grapes of Wrath* during the concert. Afterward, Elaine Steinbeck presents Bruce with a signed, first-edition copy of her late husband's book. On **November 8**, Bruce plays a remarkable show in Freehold, NJ, at St. Rose of Lima. Soozie Tyrell and Patti Scialfa guest, and Bruce debuts "In Freehold," a new song written for this show. A legal I.D. showing Freehold Borough residency is required for tickets.

A year after the tour began in New Jersey, more special homecoming performances come on **November 24-26**, at the Paramount Theatre in Asbury Park. Old friends guesting over the three nights are Danny Federici, Vini Lopez, Richard Blackwell, Big Danny Gallagher, Steve Van Zandt, Patti Scialfa and Soozie Tyrell. **December 14** in Charlotte is the last show of the year.



January - May

In January, the Jeanette Blast Furnace in Youngstown, Ohio—the "sweet Jenny" of Springsteen's "Youngstown"—is demolished. The second overseas leg of the Solo Acoustic Tour takes Bruce to the Pacific Rim from **January 27** in Tokyo to **February 17** in Melbourne. The tour is now well into its second year and still not over, but Bruce does at least take two months off from the road. He plays "The Ghost of Tom Joad" at the Grammy Awards on **February 26**, and takes home the Grammy for Best Contemporary Folk Album. This spring, "Secret Garden" charts higher than it did in its initial release two years ago, thanks to the movie *Jerry Maguire*.

Springsteen is back in Europe at the beginning of May. Before he resumes the tour, he is honored with Sweden's Polar Music Prize—kind of a Nobel Prize for musicians—on **May 5**. The Prize committee cites "an outstanding career as singer and stage performer. His authority in rock music is unshakable... [he] is also a singer of the people, a modern bard."

This final leg runs from **May 6** in Vienna through **May 26** for the final concert in Paris with guest Elliott Murphy. Bruce tells the crowd this will be his last show for a while, and "I've enjoyed playing the music from the *Tom Joad* record as much as I've enjoyed playing any music I've ever written." And so it would seem, after 129 shows on a tour that has wound up lasting a year and a half.

June - December

By late **June**, Bruce and Joe Grushecky have written four more songs together for Joe's next album. Bruce and Patti attend Springsteen's high school reunion, the 30-year reunion of Freehold High School's Class of '67.

Springsteen's first performance since the *Tom Joad* tour isn't until an **August 28** club jam in L.A., but he'll fill out the year with a few more performances: with the Wallflowers at the MTV Video Awards on **September 4**; with Bobby Bandiera later that month; paying tribute to Bob Dylan at the **December 7** Kennedy Center Honors; and with Joe Grushecky on **December 13**. Springsteen has been recording during the second half of this year, but is reportedly unhappy with the results.

January - December

As of **January 5**, 25 years have passed since the release of Springsteen's first album, *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* When the voting takes place this fall, he will for the first time be eligible for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

On **January 15**, a press release confirms that Bruce will be performing at a concert to benefit the family of slain Long Branch Police Sergeant Patrick King. Tickets go on sale on **January 17** for this "Come Together: Jon Bon Jovi and Friends" concert, selling out in eight minutes. The show on **January 31** is a summit meeting of Jersey musicians, as Bon Jovi's Friends not only include Bruce, but much of the E Street Band, Southside Johnny and quite a few Jukes, and more.

The end of **January** also brings the U.S. release of Joe Grushecky's *Coming Home*; Bruce celebrates the record release with the Houserockers in Pittsburgh on **March 2**. "We Shall Overcome" is included on the **March 17** release of *Where Have All the Flowers Gone: The Songs of Pete Seeger*; this is Springsteen's first released studio track since "Missing" was issued as an overseas single in 1996. Bruce performs at an **April 4** tribute to Elaine Steinbeck, with whom he has grown close since asking her blessing for *The Ghost of Tom Joad* back in 1995.

Bruce's father, Douglas Springsteen, dies at 73 on **April 26**. A funeral Mass is held on **April 30** at St. Rose of Lima in Freehold. By **April**, word is circulating that Springsteen and Chuck Plotkin have been at work compiling a box set of outtakes. For decades now, Springsteen has expressed his intentions of releasing some of his backlog of

material—this time, as they say, it's for real. In the **July 13** issue of *Billboard*, a full page advertisement for upcoming Sony releases ends with one word: "Bruuuuuuuuuuuuuue!!!" Beginning on **July 16**, Springsteen is in attendance at a Sony convention in Miami, FL, where he officially announces a box set in the works and plays a tape of three songs: "Where the Bands Are," "Loose Ends" and "I Wanna Be With You." As if that weren't enough, he alludes to plans for a 1999 E Street Band tour. By the end of the year, the reunion and tour will be officially announced.

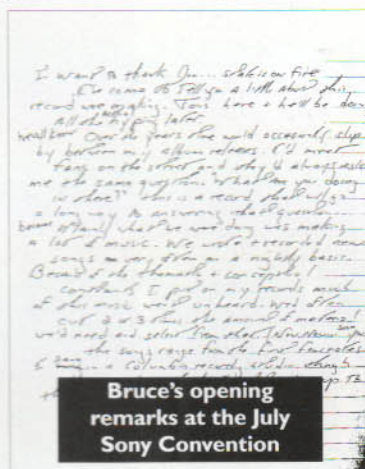
For the rest of the summer, work continues on the box in New Jersey. On **August 24**, unable to locate the master for one of his songs, he re-records "Gave It a Name" with Roy Bittan. In **mid-September**, the tapes are turned in to the label.

On **September 15**, Springsteen appears on the ballot mailed to voters

for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 14th annual election. The ballots are due back in on **October 5** to be counted. On the following day, **October 6**, a press release officially confirms the four-disc box set. *Tracks* is scheduled for a November release, commemorating "over 25 years of recording." That quarter-century is also celebrated with Springsteen's book, *Songs*, an anthology of his recorded lyrics with never-before-

seen photos and original commentary that Bruce had been working on this year. On **October 27**, the BBC comes to Asbury Park, where Bruce performs a new solo arrangement of "Born in the U.S.A." twice for the cameras. This is the beginning of a "media tour" that will find Bruce performing this song numerous times in the U.S. and Europe through the end of the year.

On **November 10**, the *Tracks* box set is released: 66 songs, 56 of them previously unreleased. The box set sells over 46,500 in its first week, and will debut at #27. On the same day that *Tracks* is released comes the official announcement: Bruce Springsteen has been elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. 🐾





MAN AT THE TOP

After 25 Years, BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN Gets His "Hall" Pass

"He did help save rock 'n' roll by becoming one of its most distinctive voices. He did eliminate the distance between the singer and the song, the storyteller and the listener. He did become a performer nonpareil, making the concert experience something akin to a religious revival meeting, where the glories of pure, unadulterated rock 'n' roll were confirmed and celebrated in the most emotional manner."

—Robert Santelli on inductee Bruce Springsteen, from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremony program

Bruce Springsteen, rock's one-time "future" is now officially a part of its permanent history. On March 15, in the main ballroom of New York's regal Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, rock 'n' roll traded black leather for black tie to induct this year's heavy-hitting class of artists, which included Springsteen, Paul McCartney, and Billy Joel, into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

This was definitely a power room. Paying up to \$3,000 a seat for the dinner/induction ceremony, there were so many representatives of rock's royalty, Hollywood's elite and an overabundance of record company honchos that no one seemed

impressed with anyone else. Neckbenders could find Jimmy Page sitting here, Neil Young sitting there, and Danny DeVito sitting up front with Sony's Tommy Mottola and in earshot of record company pioneers Ahmet Ertegun and Clive Davis.

But all egos were checked at the door to celebrate and pay homage to one of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's most popular and deserving inductee lists that also included Dusty Springfield, Del Shannon, The Staple Singers, Curtis Mayfield, Beatles' producer Sir George Martin, Charles Brown and Bob Wills & The Texas Playboys.

Throughout the Hall's history, these ceremonies have become the stuff of rock legend, with the annual all-star jams highlighting the event and melding for a few moments the talents of some of rock's most influential and charismatic legends. From the start, Springsteen has often played a major role at these events, inducting Roy Orbison, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Bob Dylan, and adding some memorable performances, including a heartfelt tribute version of Orbi-

son's "Crying," a screaming duet with Mick Jagger and a charging take of The Beatles' "Come Together" with Axl Rose.

On this night, Springsteen received rather than offered the accolades.

The excitement level before the event was primed with the pre-announcement that Springsteen would be performing with the E Street Band. In advance of his current tour, those in attendance were looking forward to getting one of the first public peeks of the reunited E Street ensemble. Later in the week, the band would hold two triumphant "rehearsal" shows on the Jersey shore.

The New York connection to the evening—with Springsteen born and raised just over the rise from the Big Apple in Freehold, New Jersey, and Joel from nearby Hicksville on Long Island—injected an extra drama, as record company locals and fans were excited to be honoring two of their favorite sons who both made their initial impact touring for years along the East Coast. This year's event produced the most media credential requests in its history.

Melissa Etheridge, who performed a steamy version of Dusty Springfield's trademark "Son

BY JAMES TURANO



The Beat Goes On: E Street Drummers Vini Lopez, Ernest Carter and Max Weinberg, 3/15/99.

of a Preacher Man" after Elton John's eloquent induction of the British diva, later told me that before she was asked to perform, she had already planned on attending the event because of Springsteen's induction.

"Oh my God, I'm a huge fan. Bruce has been such an important influence for me," she explained. "It still amazes me sometimes that I've actually become his friend and I hang out with him, but I'll always be a fan first. I really wanted to be here. I had to be here. This is a special night for him and I wanted to be a part of it."

The selection of U2's Bono to officially induct Springsteen added to the obvious magic on this night. Bono's recent humorous, hip and heartfelt speeches, including his induction of Bob Marley in 1994 and his salute to Frank Sinatra, have transformed Bono into rock's version of famed veteran entertainer George Jessel, who became known as show business' pre-eminent toastmaster.

Bono did not disappoint, delivering a relaxed and genuinely affectionate tribute. He spoke about Springsteen's legacy, his impact and his honesty. He also comically noted how Bruce has maintained his looks while others in rock have given in to Father Time. "Have you seen them? It's like Madam Tussaud's back there," he joked referring to the evening's older inductors and inductees.

In perhaps Bono's most poignant moment, he concluded by speaking for all Springsteen fans when he declared, "We call him 'The Boss.'" Well that's a bunch of crap. He's not the boss. He works for us. More than a boss—he's the owner. Because more than anyone else, Bruce Springsteen owns America's heart."

Springsteen, dressed in a simple black suit with a gray open-collared shirt, followed this grand introduction to an extended standing ovation. He then proceeded with his own insightful narrative, which appropriately recounted and reminisced about his personal and professional history, much of which he's been sharing in his music for the last quarter of a century.

It was a well-written and well-delivered speech, as Springsteen sprinkled humor among some emotional moments. Dedicating the Hall of Fame statue to his mother Adele, who sat in the audience with beaming pride, he retold the Christmas Eve story immortalized in "The Wish." By speaking of it in almost mythical terms, it is now solidly etched into the canon of his musical history.

"We stood outside the music store, and I pointed at the sunburst guitar. And she had that 60 bucks, and I said, 'I need that one.' She got me what I needed. And she protected me and provided for me, a thousand other days and nights," he said with his voice occasionally choking up. "Thanks mom, this is yours tonight," he told her from the stage, holding the award statue. "Take it home as a small return on the investment you made in your son."

Later, I had the opportunity to briefly speak with Mrs. Springsteen, and as a longtime fan I thanked her for buying that Japanese guitar that night. Bruce's mom played a major role in helping him share his talents that in turn, have entertained, invigorated and enlightened millions of fans around the world. She appeared touched by my sentiments, and said with a huge smile, grabbing my hand and pressing my forehead to hers, "It was my pleasure. That means so much to me. But you know, he's the one that did something with it."

Springsteen crystallized his career with the evening's best bit of irony. In speaking of his late father, Douglas, he affectionately commented on the peculiar influence his dad had on his music.

"I've got to thank him, because what would I have conceivably written about without him? I mean, you've got to imagine if everything had gone great between us, it would have been a disaster. I would have written just happy songs, and I tried that in the early '90s and it didn't work, the public didn't like it!" Springsteen said with a huge grin to the amusement of the audience.

Most of his speech was telecast on VH-1 two days later, but it wasn't shown in its entirety. Missing were his appreciative sentiments toward former manager Mike Appel (who attended the event as Springsteen's

guest, sharing a table with early bandmates Vini Lopez and Ernest "Boom" Carter) and a touching passage describing his bond and debt to Clemons (see the sidebar for the entire text of the speech).

Of Appel, whose notorious legal wranglings with Springsteen in the late '70s barred Bruce from recording and delayed the release of *Darkness On The Edge of Town* until 1978, Springsteen said, "Mike kicked the doors down when they needed kicking, and I consider him my friend. I want to say, Mike, thanks for everything—mostly everything."

The emotional part of Springsteen's remarks were dedicated to his manager and friend, Jon Landau. It was the former *Rolling Stone* writer who wrote in 1974, "I saw rock and roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen." On this night, Springsteen returned the favor by saying with a chuckle, "I've seen the future of rock 'n' roll management, and its name is Jon Landau."

Bumping into Landau after the event, I joked that he sure got some amazing mileage out of his quote. "Oh, they made that up for me!" he replied. I hope he was joking—if not, there is an unnamed copywriter out there who's missed out on a hell of a ride.

Springsteen's words for Landau echoed with sincerity, loyalty and love. "What I hope to give to my fans with my music—a greater sense of themselves and greater freedoms—he with his talents and his abilities has done that for me. There's no 'thank you' tonight that's gonna do the job. It's a debt that I can't repay, one that I treasure owing. Thank you, Jon, I love you," he said in an almost reverential tone.

Without directly confronting the mini-controversy swirling around the lack of induction honors for the members of the E Street Band, Springsteen also conveyed the defining debt his success and career owes to the band. He pointedly singled out each member for their individual and communal influences on his music and his life.

"Evan, Jesse, Sam—three children genealogically linked to the E Street Band—tells the rest of the story. Everybody wants to know how I feel about the band. Hell, I married one of 'em," he exclaimed.

Beginning with early members Lopez, Carter and David Sancious, and ticking down the entire E Street slate from Stevie Van Zandt to Nils Lofgren, it was clear to all that Bruce Springsteen does view himself as an eternal part of one of the best bands in rock history. He then asked all the members to join him on stage.

"I wouldn't be standing up here tonight without you, and I can't stand up here now without you," he said as each member appeared on stage, creating an embracing and celebratory group shot that for any Springsteen fan made it feel that, finally, after ten years, all was right with the world.

After all the inductions were completed, at about 10:45 p.m., stagehands began lining up a series of microphone stands that could only mean it was time for Bruce and the band (contrary to the VH-1 telecast presentation, all his songs were performed consecutively near the end of the evening).

The explosive first notes of "The Promised Land" shook the banquet hall and brought the entire audience to its feet. Though it didn't have the same sense of community and excitement felt at a legitimate Springsteen show, those there knew they were a part of history, an evening people would be talking about for years to come.

The band sounded loud and tight, with the song

Continued page 35

HE'S NOT THE BOSS HE WORKS FOR US

BONO'S INDUCTION SPEECH

Oh man, Bruce is a very unusual rock star, isn't he? Really, I mean, he hasn't done the things most rock stars do. He got rich and famous, but never embarrassed himself with all that success, did he? No drug busts, no blood changes in Switzerland. Even more remarkable, no golfing! No bad hair period, even in the '80s. No wearing of dresses in videos. But there was those fingerless gloves in the '80s. No embarrassing movie roles, no pet snakes, no monkeys. No exhibitions of his own paintings. No public brawling or setting himself on fire.

Rock stars are supposed to make soap operas of their lives, aren't they? If they don't kill themselves first. Well, you can't be a big legend and not be dysfunctional. It's not allowed. You should at least have lost your looks. Everyone else has. Have you seen them? (*Gestures backstage*) It's like Madame Tussaud's back there.

Then there's Bruce Springsteen. Handsome mother with those brooding brown eyes, eyes that could see through America. And a catastrophe of great songs, if you were another songwriter. Bruce has played every bar in the U.S.A., and every stadium. Credibility—you couldn't have more, unless you were dead. But Bruce Springsteen, you always knew, was not gonna die stupid. He didn't buy the mythology that screwed so many people. Instead he created an alternative mythology, one where ordinary lives became extraordinary and heroic. Bruce Springsteen feels familiar to us. But it's not an easy familiarity, is it? Even his band seems to stand taller when he walks in the room. It's complex. He's America's writer, and critic. It's like in *Badlands*, he's Martin Sheen and Terence Malick. To be so accessible and so private, there's a rubric. But then again, he is an Irish-Italian, with a Jewish-sounding name. What more do you want? Add one big African sax player, and no one in this room is gonna fuck with you!

In 1974, I was 14. Even I knew the '60s were over. It was the era of soft-rock and fusion. The Beatles were gone, Elvis was in Vegas. What was goin' on? Nothin' was goin' on. Bruce Springsteen was comin' on, saving music from the phonies, saving lyrics from the folkies, saving black leather jackets from the Fonz. (*Sings:*) "Oh, the greasers, they tramp the streets and get busted for sleeping on the beaches all night, and them boys in their high heels, ah Sandy, their skins are so white. Oh Sandy, love me tonight, and I promise I'll love you forever." In Dublin, Ireland, I knew what he was talking about. Here was a dude who carried himself like Brando, and Dylan, and Elvis. If John Steinbeck could sing, if Van Morrison could ride a Harley-Davidson. But he was something new, too. He was the first whiff of Scorsese, the first hint of Patti Smith, Elvis Costello and the Clash. He was the end of long hair, brown rice and bell bottoms. He was the end of the 20-minute drum solo. It was good night, Haight-Ashbury; hello, Asbury Park.

America was staggering when Springsteen appeared. The president just resigned in disgrace,

the U.S. had lost its first war. There was going to be no more oil in the ground. The days of cruising and big cars were supposed to be over. But Bruce Springsteen's vision was bigger than a Honda, it was bigger than a Subaru. Bruce made you believe that dreams were still out there, but after loss and defeat, they had to be braver, not just bigger. He was singing, "Now you're scared and you're thinking that maybe we ain't that young anymore," because it took guts to be romantic now. Knowing you could lose didn't mean you still didn't take the ride. In fact, it made taking the ride all the more important.

Here was a new vision, and a new community. More than a community, because every great rock group is kind of like starting a religion. And Bruce surrounded himself with fellow believers. The E Street wasn't just a great rock group, or a street gang. It was a brotherhood. Zealots like Steve Van Zandt, the bishop Clarence Clemons, the holy Roy Bittan, crusaders Danny Federici, Max Weinberg, Garry Tallent and later Nils Lofgren. And Jon Landau, Jon Landau, Jon Landau, Jon Landau, Jon Landau. What do you call a man who makes his best friend his manager, his producer, his confessor? You call him the Boss. And Springsteen didn't just marry a gorgeous red-headed woman from the Jersey Shore. She could sing, she could write, and she could tell the Boss off. And that's Patti, right there [*points*].

For me and the rest of the U2-ers, it wasn't just the way he described the world. It was the way he

negotiated it. It was a map, a book of instructions on how to be in the business but not of it. Generous is a word you could use to describe the way he treated us. Decency is another. But these words can box you in. I remember when Bruce was headlining Amnesty International's tour for prisoners of conscience, I remember thinking, "Wow, if ever there was a prisoner of conscience, it's Bruce Springsteen." Integrity can be a yoke, a pain in the ass, when your songs are taking you to a part of town where people don't expect to see you.

At some point I remember riding in an elevator with gentleman Bruce, where he just stared straight ahead of himself, and completely ignored me. I was crushed. Only when he walked into the doors as they were opening, did I realize the impossible was happening. My god, Bruce Springsteen, the Buddha of my youth, is plastered! Drunk as a skunk! Pissed as a fart! I had to go back to the book of instructions, scratch the bit out about how you held yourself in public. By the way, that was, on a personal note, a great relief.

Something was going on, though. As a fan, I could see that my hero was beginning to rebel against his own public image. Things got even more interesting on *Tunnel of Love*, when he started to deface it. A remarkable bunch of tunes, where our leader starts having a go at himself, and the hypocrisy of his own heart, before anyone else could. But the tabloids could never break news on Bruce Springsteen. Because his fans... he had already told us everything in the songs. We knew he was spinning. We could feel him free-falling. But it wasn't in chaos or entropy. It was in love.

We call him "The Boss." Well that's a bunch of crap. He's not the boss. He works for us. More than a boss—he's the owner. Because more than anyone else, Bruce Springsteen owns America's heart.



KEVIN MAZUR PHOTO

ROCK 'N' ROLL: IT'S A BAND THING

SPRINGSTEEN'S SPEECH

KEVIN MAZUR PHOTO



You should remember: you always want an Irishman to give your induction speech. I knew I always liked you, Bono. You were scaring me a little bit there, though. I wasn't that good—but I liked the part about my good looks.

I guess, let me warn you, the records took two years, the show's three hours, so the speech may take a little while.

I stood on this stage and I inducted Roy Orbison and Creedence Clearwater Revival and Bob Dylan, an artist whose music was a critical part of my own life. And tonight I hope that my music served my audience half as well. If I succeed in doing that, it's been with the help of many, many kindred spirits along the way.

I'd like to thank my mother, Adele, for that slushy Christmas Eve, for that Christmas Eve night—like the one outside—we stood outside the music store, and I pointed at the sunburst guitar. And she had that 60 bucks, and I said, 'I need that one.' She got me what I

needed. And she protected me and provided for me, a thousand other days and nights. As importantly, she gave me a sense of work as something that was joyous and that filled you with pride and self-regard and that committed you to your world. Thanks, Mom, this is yours tonight [holds up the statue]. Take it home as a small return on the investment you made in your son. Mama! The Italian side of the family: Mama!

Now my dad, he passed away this year, but I've got to thank him, because what would I have conceivably written about without him? I mean, you've got to imagine, if everything had gone great between us, it would have been a disaster. I would have written just happy songs—and I tried that in the early '90s and it didn't work. The public didn't like it!

He never said much about my music, except that his favorite songs were the ones about him. And that was enough, you know? I put on his work clothes, and I went to work. It was the way that I honored him. My parents' experience forged my own. They shaped

my politics, and they alerted me to what is at stake when you're born in the U.S.A. I miss you, Dad.

A lot of other people: Marion and Tex Vinyard, they took me under their wing when I was 15. They opened up their home to a bunch of rock 'n' roll misfits and let us make a lot of noise and practice all night long. Thanks, Marion. Carl "Tinker" West, another one of my early managers whose support I couldn't have done without. He introduced me to Mike Appel, and Mike kicked the doors down when they needed kicking, and I consider him my friend. I want to say, Mike, thanks for everything—mostly everything (laughs). And thanks for being my guest here tonight. I'm glad you're here with me.

Mike introduced me to the world of Columbia Records, which has been my home for the past 25 years, from the early days with John Hammond and Clive Davis to the high rolling times with Walter Yetnikoff and Al Teller, to the present with my friend Tommy Mottola and Donny Ienner. They created a

conduit for a lifetime of thoughts and ideas, a place where I felt safe and supported and encouraged to do my best and my truest work. I've heard enough record company horror stories right from this stage to appreciate the fact that I don't have one. For that I've got to thank all the men and women at Columbia Records around the world for my success. Thanks very much for your efforts.

I've got to thank my co-producer Chuck Plotkin and engineer, Toby Scott, for a sustained contribution to my recorded work. They remained in the saddle as often years went by wondering if we'd ever get the music out or if they'd ever get a royalty check. They kept their cool and their creativity—of course, they're basket cases now, but we remain friends and great working partners. And no mention of my records would be complete without Bob Clearmountain, the great mixer, who helped me bring my music to a larger audience.

I want to thank my tour director, George Travis, and the great crews he's assembled on the road over the years. Thank you, George. I want to thank my agents Barry Bell and Frank Barsalona, for a great job.

All right, thank you, and now, the lawyers. You gotta thank them, you know (laughs). Peter Parcher and Steve Hayes, they've protected me and my music for 22 years; I appreciate it. This next one's a little tough: Alan Grubman and Artie Indursky, names familiar to many in this room. They're the "money men." How can I put this? These are great and complicated and misunderstood Americans. They're men that are entrusted with a very, very important task. For the folks that don't know, the money man goes to the record company, and he's in charge in bringing back the pink Cadillac. When Alan and Artie go, they bring back the pink Cadillac, and the blue Cadillac, and the red Cadillac, and the yellow Cadillac. The pink Cadillac with the whitewalls. But then they take the blue Cadillac. And they take the hubcaps off the yellow Cadillac. But, that still leaves you with a few Cadillacs. And they make sure that neither you nor themselves, of course, are gonna be broke when you're riding in the black Cadillac. They do that well.

I've gotta thank Barbara Carr for her love, loyalty, and dedication. I couldn't get along without you, Barb. My friend, Dave Marsh, thank you so much. And oh, the next guy, this is Jon Landau—or as I sometimes call him, Jon "Thank God I'm A Country Boy" Landau. *I've seen the future of rock and roll management and its name is Jon Landau.* Return the favor, there (laughs). That quote was managing. It was a might burdensome for me, but as he often said, "That's your job." But Jon's given me something beyond friendship and beyond guidance: his intelligence, his sense of the truth, his recognition of my intelligence. We were worlds that collided. His creative ability as producer, and editor—speechwriter earlier this evening—his ability to see through to the heart of matters, both professional and personal, and the love he's given me has altered my life forever. What I hope to give to my fans with my music—a greater sense of themselves and greater freedoms—he with his talents and his abilities has done that for me. There's no "thank you" tonight that's gonna do the job. It's a debt that I can't repay, one that I treasure owing. Thank you, Jon, I love you. I also want to thank Barbara Landau, and Kate and Charlie, for sharing Jon with me over the years. I know it hasn't been easy.

Now, last but not least, the men and women—the mighty men and women of the E Street Band. Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord. Who I have reeducated and rededicated, re-animated, resuscitated and reinvigorated with the power, the magic, the mystery, the ministry of rock and roll.

Vini Lopez, "Boom" Carter, early drummers of the band. Davey Sancious.

Nils Lofgren, the most over-qualified second guitarist in show business. He plays ten times better than me, and he still wanders over to hear my solos when I play. I guess he's checking to see if I'm getting any better.

Danny Federici, the most instinctive and natural musician I ever met, and the only member of the band that can reduce me to a shouting mess. I love you, Danny, your organ and accordion playing brought the boardwalks of Central and South Jersey alive in my music. Thank you.

Garry Tallent, Southern Man, my lovely friend, great bass player, rock and roll aficionado, whose quiet and dignity grace my band and my life. Thank you, Garry.

Roy Bittan. Roy's playing formed the signature sound of some of my greatest records. He can play anything. He's always there for me. His emotional generosity and his deep personal support mean a great, great deal to me. Thank you, Roy.

Max Weinberg, Mighty Max! Star of the Conan O'Brien show. Conan ain't too bad, either. Max found a place where Bernard Perdie, Buddy Rich and Keith Moon intersected, and he made it his own. I ask, and he delivers for me every night. Thank you, Max.

Stevie Van Zandt. For those of you who have seen *The Sopranos* and worry that that's what Steve is like: that's what he's like! A lifetime of rock 'n' roll friendship. We did it all. Great songwriter, producer, great guitarist. We haven't played together in 15 years, and if it's up to me, that will never happen again. I love you, Steve.

Patti Scialfa. She busted the boys club (laughs). Big time! Oh... It went like this: "Okay, fellas, there's gonna be a woman in the band. We need someone to sing all the high parts. How complicated can it get?" A nice paparazzi photo of me in my jockey shorts on a balcony in Rome tendered the best years of my life. Evan, Jesse, Sam—three children genealogically linked to the E Street Band—tells the rest of the story. Everybody wants to know how I feel about the band. Hell, I married one of 'em. Thank you, baby, you hit all the high notes. You're tougher than the rest.

Now, last but not least: Clarence Clemons. You wanna be like him, but you can't. The night I met Clarence, and he got on stage, a sound came out of his horn that—it seemed to rattle the glasses behind the bar and threaten to blow out the back wall. The door literally blew off the club in a storm that night, and I knew I'd found my sax player. But there was something else. Something happened when we stood side-by-side. Some energy. Some unspoken story. For 15 years, Clarence has been a source of myth and light and enormous strength for me on stage. He has filled my heart so many nights, so many nights. I love it when he wraps me in those arms at the end of the night. That night we first stood together, I looked over at "C" and it looked like his head reached into the clouds, and I felt like a mere mortal scurrying upon the Earth. But he always lifted me up. Way, way, way up. Together, we told a story of the possibilities of friendship. A story older than the ones that I would write. And a story I could have never told without him at my side. Thank you, Big Man. I love you so much.

So, as Stevie Van Zandt says, "Rock 'n' roll. It's a band thing." And that includes you, the audience. Thank you for giving me access and entrance into your lives and I hope that I've been a good companion. But right now, my wife, my great friends, my great collaborators, my great band: Your presence tonight honors me, and I wouldn't be standing up here tonight without you, and I can't stand up here now without you. Please join me.

enabling almost all of the band members to shine. The crowd gave Clemons a huge ovation during his first solo, and swelled again when Bruce took out his harmonica to center stage. The band followed "The Promised Land" with a passionate, driving version of "Backstreets," which Springsteen sang with a rough and gnarled vocal that brought chills to the Bruce faithful in the audience. A jubilant version of "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," which had the band firing on all cylinders and drew the most audience response, found Springsteen roaming the stage, guitar slung over his shoulder, enjoying the song's celebration of the band and his friends. Finally, a tasty treat of "In The Midnight Hour" with an age-defying Wilson Pickett ended the electrified set on a high and historical note.

After their crowd-rousing set, E Street keyboardist Roy Bittan commented that the band was in a good groove, "Yes, it felt good up there. The rehearsals have gone great, it's like we've never been away. It's like putting on your favorite glove, the fit is good and comfortable."

Springsteen then surrendered the stage to the other rock luminaries and inductees in attendance. However, a veteran of these Rock Hall all-star jams, Springsteen later returned to contribute his guitar and vocals to some of the inductees' big hits and performances, including a rave-up version of the Ray Charles classic "What'd I Say," by Billy Joel (Charles inducted Joel earlier in the evening); an all-star rendition of absent inductee Curtis Mayfield's spiritual "People Get Ready" (on which Springsteen sang a verse); and Paul McCartney's tribute to the late Carl Perkins on "Blue Suede Shoes."

Near the end of the show, Joel began to play the opening chords to the Beatles hymn, "Let It Be," which coaxed McCartney out of his audience seat and back to the stage for an emotional and triumphant finale. As McCartney walked toward the microphone to take over the lead vocals from Joel after the first verse, he walked past an ear-to-ear smiling Springsteen, who mouthed to McCartney, "Hey, it's your song." McCartney's pleading performance of "Let It Be" was stirring, considering the loss of his wife Linda, to whom he dedicated his award in his induction acceptance speech.

As the show closed, McCartney, Springsteen and Joel hugged one another and walked off-stage together with an obvious appreciation of the night and each other.

In a time in the music scene when one-hit wonders abound and new artists are failing to create strong fan bases, there is a void that needs to be filled. For their first public performance since getting back together, Bruce and the band proved this reunion was not just nostalgia, but a rock and roll necessity. Feeling the power of the music, it joyously reminded me just how vital Bruce's music and live performances really are. Anything he and the E Street Band may have lost in the pure energy of youth, they have gained in commitment, charisma, and passion. Today's rockers, many of them in the audience, got a compelling lesson from the masters. Even though he's been around for 25 years and is now even a Hall of Famer, this night it seemed like I too saw rock and roll's future.

It may have taken 14 years, but with the exciting and deserving induction of Bruce Springsteen, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame finally feels whole. 🐾

James Turano is an entertainment/music writer and radio talk show host in Chicago.

REB

BY
CHRISTOPHER
PHILLIPS



IRTH



Bruce Springsteen

stands alone at the microphone, center stage, in a single pool of light. He is strumming his guitar, but lightly enough that the words he sings sound nearly a cappella: "I'll wait for you; should I fall behind, wait for me."

But Springsteen is not alone. From out of the darkness steps Steve Van Zandt, who takes Bruce's place at the mic for the next verse. "We swore we'd travel, darlin', side by side...."

Nils Lofgren takes the bridge, joined by Patti Scialfa—and as their intertwining harmonies fade, Clarence Clemons takes his turn stepping into the light. The Big Man plays a sweet, swelling saxophone solo, dripping in reverb, but even sweeter is when his deep, sonorous voice begins the final verse. "There's a beautiful river in the valley ahead...."

By now Max Weinberg is adding light percussion, on top of Garry Tallent's bassline that entered almost imperceptibly but is now carrying the song toward its climax. Bruce has returned to sing the last line: "Should we lose each other in the shadow of the evening trees..."

And the rest all come back to repeat: "I'll wait for you, should I fall behind, wait for me."

First singly, and then, of course, together.

This has come at the end of a triumphant two-and-a-half hours with the reunited E Street Band, their first full public concert in over ten years. The band has been shaking the Asbury Park boardwalk—and 2,000 or so lucky fans—with classics like "Born to Run," "The Promised Land" and "Backstreets." But it is this quiet performance of a

1992 song that truly takes our breath away.

The recasting of this song does so much in the span of just a few minutes. It is, of course, a love song—now performed with the woman Bruce wrote it for. It's also a song from the period when Springsteen was going it alone, now performed and enriched by members of the E Street Band. Already a successful "solo" work, Springsteen and the E Street Band have transformed the song into a showcase of E Street talent. With so many strong voices on stage, Springsteen has wisely chosen to highlight them. Perhaps above all, the meaning of the song itself expands, now that it's shared with his friends and comrades in arms, whose steps have fallen so differently over the past ten years. Where a song like "Blood Brothers" might have been an obvious choice, "If I Should Fall Behind" acts as a simple, poignant evocation of the ties that bind this band together, joining them once again.

I'll wait for you, should I fall behind, wait for me. Who, if anyone, has done the falling behind over the last decade is a matter of opinion. But as for who has done the waiting, that's everyone in the room and then some. Tonight, the wait is finally over.

The E Street Band has reunited a handful of times since Springsteen decided to try working with other musicians. Most notably, they reconvened for 1995's *Greatest Hits* and for a pair of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame celebrations—including Bruce's induction just a few days before these 1999 Asbury Park concerts. But when the announcement came on December 8, 1998 that Bruce Springsteen would be touring with the E Street Band, it was something fans had waited more than a decade for—the band's first tour together since Amnesty International's Human Rights Now! Tour in 1988. This would be Steve Van Zandt's first tour with Springsteen in 18 years.

Bruce and the band—Van Zandt, Lofgren, Scialfa, Clemons, Weinberg, Tallent, Danny Federici and Roy Bittan—began rehearsing at



Springsteen and Steve "Silvio" Van Zandt, two hearts getting the job done on 3/18/99.

Convention Hall in early March. The ornate structure shares the northern end of the Asbury Park boardwalk with the adjacent Paramount Theater, where Bruce has rehearsed and performed in the past. But Convention Hall, which juts out over the beach into the surf, has managed to elude Springsteen for some 25 years.

For a week, fans gathered on the beach, braving the cold—made worse by the wind whipping right off the ocean and across the boardwalk—to listen to those closed rehearsals. One fan told the *Asbury Park Press*, "You can hear them really well from the beach, and you can hear even better from the platform I built"—out of driftwood.

On March 11, the last day of rehearsal before the E Streeters had to make way for that weekend's "March Metal Meltdown," a security guard stepped outside and told the fans gathered there, "I'm going to do you guys one hell of a favor." Bruce welcomed his first audience—"You guys have been out in the cold too long!"—and treated them to five songs: "The Promised Land," "Tougher Than the Rest," "She's the One," "Backstreets," and "Bobby Jean."

When the Convention Hall doors were opened to fans again just one week later, it was an official invitation to everyone—at least, to anyone who could get tickets. Fans lined the boardwalk back past

Madame Marie's booth for "Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band: A Rehearsal." These two hometown shows on March 18 and 19 would serve as a warm-up for the tour's first leg in Europe. The shows were announced as one-hour performances, but fans had a hard time imagining Springsteen being able to stop after just 60 minutes. And they were right. Much like Springsteen's warm-up at the nearby Count Basie Theater before heading overseas back in 1993, which was also billed as a rehearsal, these shows would prove unique. In this case, full-length E Street Band concerts, arena-sized shows in a venue as small as a high school gym.

Reports from the rehearsals had given fans some idea of what was in store: a mix of material from Springsteen's entire career, including new takes on some of his '90s material and new arrangements of E Street classics. But on March 18 those songs were given a context as the 1999 Tour set took shape before the eyes of roughly 2,000 fans—eyes that, inside the intimate Convention Hall, could take in every hand motion, every sidelong glance and grin exchanged as the E Street Band put it all together.

Only a few of the old songs, like "Thunder Road" and "Badlands," came off as tired, having been played the same way so many

times—the E Street Band could probably still play them in their sleep even after a decade. But on the whole, particularly for opening night, it was a stunning reminder of just why fans have been clamoring to get this band back together. Having made their own way since 1988, with an extra decade of experience—and with the band clearly no longer something to take for granted—the re-formed E Streeters came armed with both the precision and passion to make it worth the wait. But really, sometimes it only takes four words to make a Springsteen fan's night, and after he offered a welcome to Asbury Park, we got them: "One! Two! Three! Four!"

In the opening "Prove It All Night," Bruce wasted no time in stepping up to take an extended guitar lead—which he continued to do throughout the evening, despite sharing the stage with both Lofgren and Van Zandt. But Bruce isn't one to hog it, and the guitar interplay between the three was one highlight of the show. After going it completely alone on the *Tom Joad* tour, he seemed to be having the most fun inviting that interplay, pointing to band members for solos and calling them to the mic. As he did for the second song—"C'mon, Steve!"—when he and Van Zandt did their trademark mic-sharing on "Two Hearts."

The set was surprisingly light on songs from *Tracks*, especially consid-



JOHN CAVANAUGH PHOTO

ering the amount of potential new material—and considering how fantastic “My Love Will Not Let You Down” sounded. Performed live for the first time, “My Love” brought Bruce, Steve, and Nils down front, their chiming guitars building one on top of the other. Finally, there it was: the “loud noise” that Springsteen has been threatening to make again for years.

But another advantage to this line-up of the E Street Band is its versatility—three electric guitars on stage at the same time was not the rule. Nils moved to slide guitar and Danny to accordion for a knock-out sequence of new arrangements. “Factory” was a gospel-tinged country number featuring Patti dueting on vocals and Roy with a beautiful piano accompaniment. A soulful solo from Clarence, bathed in blue light, began a new take on “The River.” “Youngstown,” opening with Danny’s subdued accordion strains, was in short order reinvented as a raging rocker, the band kicking in after the first chorus.

When Bruce was forced to step away from the mic momentarily to change guitars on “Badlands,” the crowd didn’t hesitate, voices swelling to finish the verse. “Spirit in the Night” was botched with a missed cue (as Bruce laughed, “my fault!”). This was a rehearsal, after all. But it was one of very few noticeable gaffes of the night, and as the song came to a tight ending, he shouted, “Damn, that felt good!”

“The Ghost of Tom Joad” was another song to get a fresh E Street treatment, with Danny on accordion, Steve on mandolin, Nils on slide, and particularly impressive, Garry on stand-up bass. A few songs later, one of the biggest cheers of the night came for Roy’s opening strains of “Backstreets.”

Once “Backstreets” wound down, a steady beat began shaking the bleachers. For years now, Max Weinberg has been playing constantly with his *Late Night* gig—1,048 programs with perfect attendance up until his leave of absence—and it shows. Max’s powerhouse intro to “Light of Day” was only one of many awe-inspiring moments from the Mighty One over the course of the evening. He didn’t miss a beat, and came across as the linchpin of the band. The others soon joined in on “Light of Day,” and though Springsteen was still working out his preacher shtick in the middle, one moment rang true as he exclaimed, “I cannot promise you everlasting life, but I can promise you life... right now.”

While Springsteen addressed the crowd only occasionally, he took a

moment to look around Convention Hall during the encores. “It’s really exciting for me to be able to come here,” he said. “I saw so many... oh, let me see, when I was 15, it was the Who, the Blues Magoos (they had electric suits) and Herman’s Hermits. And I sat right about *there*. And man, that was a big night: nobody knew who the Who were and they busted up all the instruments.... ‘Was that real? Damn, can we go back there and salvage some of that shit?’”

“And I sat up there and saw the Doors... I’ve never played here. It’s nice to be able to play here tonight. This is a special night for us, because it’s kind of a re-dedication—it is, it’s a re-dedication of our band, and the job that we do, and our commitment to serve. So it’s a big, big night. Don’t know what to say, except I’m real happy.”

In keeping with that commitment to serve, all proceeds from these shows went to benefit four organizations working to better Asbury Park: After School Tutorial Education Program, the Early Intervention Program of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, the West Side Community Center of Asbury Park, and Save Tillie.

With tickets so tight, not everyone made it inside for the first concert. But some fans got lucky on the 19th after being stuck out in the cold and were rewarded with an even better show. The band sounded tighter, played longer, and broke out six songs not played on the 18th. Turning up early in the set were “Darlington County,” “Mansion on the Hill” and “Murder Inc.,” complete with Max’s staccato machine-gun fills. “For You” was the second night’s hometown special, taking the place of “Spirit in the Night.”

“Give the Girl a Kiss” was introduced as “something silly.... We cut this for *Darkness of the Edge of Town*. Now you’re gonna see why we didn’t use it.” It went off without a hitch, though, Bruce running along the apron, and the crowd loved it. As for the silly part, in a sketch at the end of the song Patti caught Bruce making out with his guitar.

But the real surprise came after “Tenth Avenue Freeze-out.” The stage went dark—but it was easier to see than it was to believe as Bruce walked over and sat down at the piano. As he got settled, he told the stunned audience, “Haven’t played this on stage in a long time. But I think I can! I gotta get *really* ready when I’m gonna play the piano. ‘Cause Roy is listening *really* close. I gotta be half-good.

“This is a song a lot of people requested, wasn’t on *Tracks*... this is for all the die-hard fans out there.” And for the first time since July 15, 1978, he performed “The Promise.”

“If I Should Fall Behind” comes to a close, but Springsteen isn’t quite done. “We got one more thing. We’re going to leave you with something new, because it’s a night of rebirth. And this is called ‘Land of Hope and Dreams.’ Just tell everybody we’ll be seein’ ‘em, and we love ya, and this summer there’s a big train coming down the tracks.”

Max’s drums propel the new song’s opening, as Bruce begins to sing: “Grab your ticket and your suitcase, thunder’s rollin’ down the track.” What follows sounds like a

distillation of everything Springsteen has written about, not to mention a reunion of his characters: saints, sinners, losers, winners, whores, gamblers, midnight ramblers, fools, kings, broken hearted, souls departed.... It’s practically a theme song. If there’s a more appropriate anthem—or a better argument that this isn’t going to be merely a nostalgia tour—I’d like to hear it. With Clarence’s wailing sax washing over us, Steve’s mandolin ringing out like the bells of freedom Springsteen is singing of, it occurs to me that this new song is probably the best I’ve heard all night. And as the members of the E Street Band repeat “This train!” on ever-rising notes like a gospel choir, Bruce brings it all home: “Faith will be rewarded.”

Amen, and all aboard. ➤

410318	GA	GAB 48	ADULT
20.00	GEN ADM STANDING	20.00	
4.00	1 CONVENTION HALL NJ 1		
GA	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN		
CA 1X	A REHEARSAL		
GAB 48	AND THE E STREET BAND		
OUT9844	NO RECORD/CAMERAS/LASERS		
17MAR99	THU MAR 18, 1999 7PM		

Prove It All Night
Two Hearts
Darkness on the Edge of Town
My Love Will Not Let You Down
Factory
The River
Youngstown
Badlands
Out in the Street
Tenth Avenue Freeze-out
Tougher Than the Rest
Spirit in the Night
The Ghost of Tom Joad
The Promised Land
She’s the One
Backstreets
Light of Day

Born to Run
Bobby Jean
Streets of Philadelphia

Thunder Road
If I Should Fall Behind
Land of Hope and Dreams

410319	GA	GAB 33	ADULT
20.00	GEN ADM STANDING	20.00	
5.00	2 CONVENTION HALL NJ 2		
GA	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN		
CA 1X	A REHEARSAL		
GAB 33	AND THE E STREET BAND		
OUT9844	NO RECORD/CAMERAS/LASERS		
18MAR99	FRI MAR 19, 1999 7PM		

The Promised Land
Two Hearts
Darkness on the Edge of Town
Darlington County
Mansion on the Hill
The River
Youngstown
Murder Incorporated
Badlands
Out in the Street
Tenth Avenue Freeze-out
The Promise
My Love Will Not Let You Down
For You
The Ghost of Tom Joad
Give the Girl a Kiss
She’s the One
Backstreets
Light of Day

Streets of Philadelphia
Bobby Jean
Born to Run

Thunder Road
If I Should Fall Behind
Land of Hope and Dreams



JOHN CAMANAU PHOTO

ON COLLECT ING

By Richard Breton

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.



•Human Rights Now!

(Gamble, 2CD)

Sound: 8

Performance: 8

Packaging: 7

The official name of the Amnesty tour serves as the title of this release, *Human Rights Now!* The bulk of this set is taken from the Oakland, CA, show from September 23, 1988—almost halfway into the tour. Because Sting wasn't present at this show, Bruce's set was extended to 14 songs. The set begins with the crowd, led by Peter Gabriel, singing "Happy Birthday." Bruce and the E Street Band launch into "War," followed by "Born in the U.S.A." and "The Promised

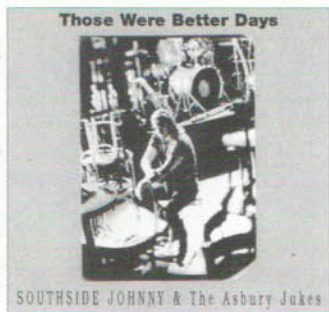
Land" to hammer the point of the evening home.

The setlist for this night is notable for "Tunnel of Love," sans the long instrumental intro that was typical of the *Tunnel* tour. Another notable inclusion is "I Ain't Got No Home," a rarely played Woody Guthrie cover and as fine a version as you will hear. "Born to Run" is played as the full-band rocker, not the acoustic version, and "Thunder Road" also makes an appearance. Some songs are given shortened arrangements: "Cover Me" clocks in at around 2:54.

This is one of the best audience recordings of the 1988 Amnesty shows, not quite as good as the best audience tapes of the *Tunnel* Tour, but still excellent. Bruce's vocals are mostly front-and-center, which is good, but the band is mixed too low on the louder songs. The sound is clean and clear, and at times on the quieter songs it sounds like this could have been from a radio broadcast or soundboard. The very beginning of "The River" is clipped, as are the long keyboard intros to "My Hometown" and "Chimes of Freedom."

Bonus tracks include additional songs played on the tour from other dates, their sound ranging from good to excellent, but it's too bad Bruce's duet with Joan Baez on "Blowin' in the Wind" from the show on the 23rd wasn't included.

I've never been a big booster of the 1988 Amnesty shows. They seemed too short to get a real momentum going, and sometimes the performances suffered. But they did include many songs not played on the *Tunnel of Love* tour, and sets by the other artists on the bill made for a fun night. This is one of the best and most complete documents of a Bruce Amnesty show, and with the bonus tracks, it pretty much sums up the entire tour. The only fault in the packaging is that the



last two songs on disc one aren't listed on the back. If you're a fan of the Amnesty shows, this set is for you.

•Those Were Better Days

(Doberman, 2CD-R)

Sound: 9

Packaging: 6

Performance: 10

•If We Play All These Songs...

(Doberman, 2CD-R)

Sound: 9

Packaging: 6

Performance: 10

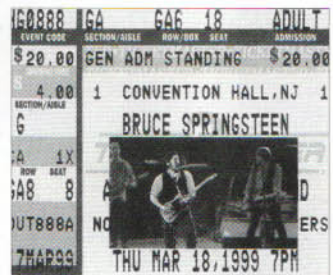
There's never been a large number of Southside Johnny titles released, just an even dozen at last count. Chances are the vast majority of labels just don't believe there's a market for these titles. But there is—a small market, maybe, but loyal to a fault. For them, here's two titles that represent some of the best Southside Johnny CDs released in quite a while.

Those Were Better Days is mostly taken from a radio broadcast of a show at the Paradiso in Amsterdam on March 30, 1992, for the *Better Days* European tour. *If We Play All These Songs...* is from a June 25, 1995, show at the Leadmill in Sheffield, England. That both of these titles document European shows is the only major common thread between them. The Asbury Jukes are in force for *Those Were Better Days*, while *If We Play All These Songs...* is an acoustic show with just Johnny on harmonica and Bobby Bandiera on guitar.

Including bonus tracks from two other 1992 Europe shows, *Those Were Better Days* captures the Jukes in solid form. They deliver a variety of tracks from *Better Days*, as well as a few songs from *At Least We Got Shoes*, several covers and the well-chosen classic. Bobby Bandiera even gets front-and-center for a version of his own "C'mon Caroline." It's not the complete show, just what was broadcast, but it sounds great. Little Steven shows up on the bonus tracks.

If We Play All These Songs... is taken from a complete, pristine soundboard tape. It's an exceptional acoustic showcase for both Southside and Bobby Bandiera, both in top form and having a great time with the crowd. At 27 songs, with multiple encores and plenty of covers, this was quite

possibly the longest acoustic show of the tour. While Bobby shines on guitar throughout, he positively glows on lead vocals for "Can't Help Falling In Love." For those who liked the official *Spittin' Fire* release, you'll love this as much if not more.



•Big Big Night in Asbury Park

(Crystal Cat, 2CD)

Sound: 8

Performance: 8

Packaging: 7

You knew it was coming, the first CD set of the 1999 tour—sort of. This set is taken from March 18 at Convention Hall, the first of the two rehearsal gigs in Asbury Park, NJ, just before the official start of the tour.

The band was still a bit rough around the edges in spots, but there are plenty of new arrangements of old songs to make things interesting. The final two songs are extra-special: a beautifully arranged "If I Should Fall Behind," leaving nary a dry eye in the house, and a new one called "Land of Hope and Dreams," an extended mid-tempo tune that's a perfect show closer.

The packaging on this set is fine for a rush job—the fastest turnaround I've seen for a release from Crystal Cat. The sound is great, as is the sound on circulating tapes of this show. Luckily, in the case of this tape, someone found a spot with little audience interference. There is one bonus track, Bruce's new solo arrangement of "Born in the U.S.A." from the short European interview sojourn last December.

While this may be the first CD release of the current tour, it won't be the last by a long shot—or the best. The floodgates are opening as we speak, with more releases from the European portion of the tour already scheduled just from the April shows. By this fall there will be a plethora of releases to choose from. This release is a great start, though: a fine document of a special night. ➔

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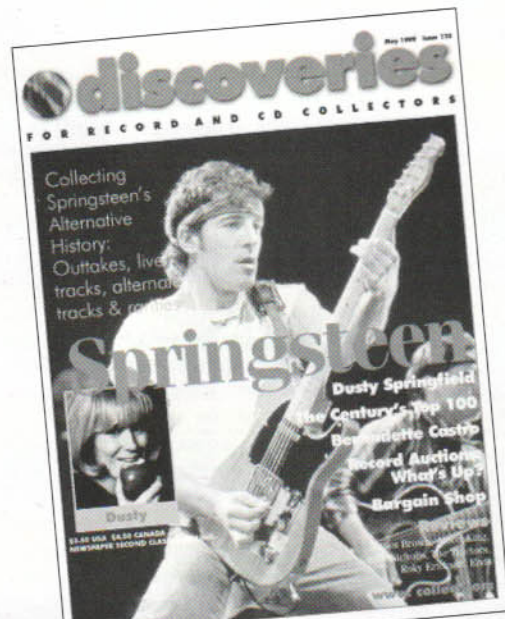
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SPRING 1999

Continued from page 9

turn out the lights and catch mice. We'd stick them in a milk bottle and put them in the vacant lot across the street.

I still remember waking up to a mouse eating a pack of crackers next to my bed. Or someone jumping out of bed because a mouse was eating a Snickers bar.

We did well when we played. We made a lot of money when we played, but we only played once or twice a month. Once we played a concert at Monmouth College with Canned Heat and NRBQ. I remember being in the back room with Tinker, and everyone was counting the money with this cop there. We made, like, \$3,000. This was in 1970. We're sitting there together, counting: "One for you, one for you, one for you," with 20s. This cop was pissed. We made \$700 a piece that night, and he made \$50 for security. It was one of those times you just had to snicker.

Did you ever get together with Bruce after he went solo and you went back to school?

Bruce was in Virginia in 1974, and we had this house out in the country. We'd get together with people on this 800-acre farm. A friend came out with me in his new jeep. This guy let us borrow this jeep, because he was enamored with Bruce and I was a friend of his. Well, we wrecked that jeep. Bruce had to walk back and tell this guy we wrecked his jeep. It was not fun at that point, but ten years later, when I played with Bruce at the Bayou [in Washington, D.C.], it turned out to be one of the best times we ever had, wrecking this guy's jeep.

You also joined Bruce on stage around that time?

Yeah, it was during the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour. He invited me down to Charlotte. He was playing the Civic Center there. Gary U.S. Bonds was there too. He called us both up on stage to sing. I've been looking forever to find someone who has a picture of that.

On the way back from the concert, I got pulled over for speeding right outside Charlotte. The cop says, "What's your hurry?" I said, "Man, I'm just trying to get home. I've been in town for the Springsteen concert. I played there with Bruce." He goes, "Yeah right." Just by chance, they wrote a big story in the paper about the concert and mentioned that I was up on the stage. So I had bought a half-dozen newspapers and had them in the car. I said, "Hey man, I've got a half-dozen papers to prove it." For once in my life I was telling the truth, and I had the evidence. The cop said, "God damn. Have a good day," and let me off. 🚗

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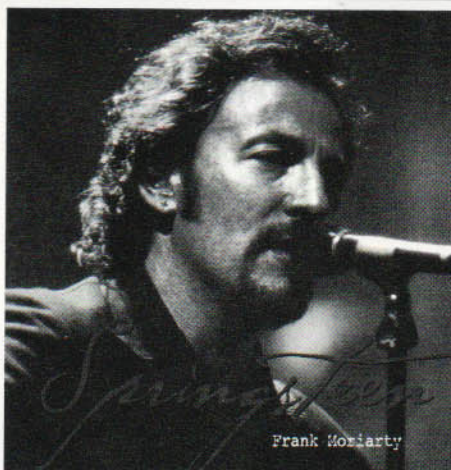
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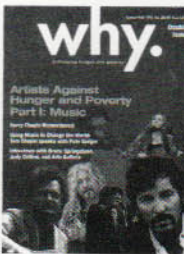
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